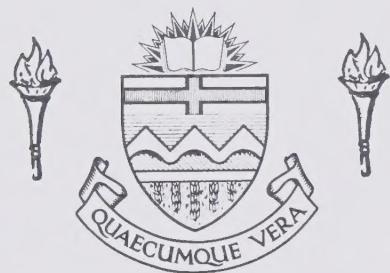


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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND POVERTY: DETERRENTS TO INVOLVEMENT

by

(C)

WAYNE WILLIAM COULTER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend  
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis  
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INVOLVEMENT submitted by Wayne William Coulter in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the non-participation of the urban poor in the political process. I argue firstly, that our theory of democracy must emphasize democratic responsiveness both as an end and as a means for the satisfaction of interests. This emphasis is particularly vital when we consider the situation of groups such as the urban poor who are both disadvantaged and non-participant.

As well, I argue that we should employ a broad notion of political participation, one which encompasses variance in the perception of political participation and the political process. I argue that the urban poor are non-participant because they see politics as ineffective, ritualistic, alien, and external. Factors which mitigate against the participation of the urban poor in the political process are delineated. My focus is the structural and systemic factors which depress and discourage the urban poor and tend to reduce them to passive objects external to, and not involved in the urban political system.

Some unpretentious suggestions are set forth.



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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Despite the great deal of writing that has been devoted to the relationship between poverty and participation in politics there has not been any substantial measure of agreement on many important aspects of that relationship. Evidence abounds that those of lower income fail to participate in politics to the same extent as higher economic groups.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be a fairly direct and clear relationship between economic class and the extent of participation in political life. Those who are poor participate less than other groups in all categories of political participation--voting, partisan party activity and other forms of involvement. This phenomenon will be taken here as well established and my primary concern will be to delineate the most important social and bureaucratic determinants of the nonparticipation of the poor. I will argue that because of (1) variance in the meaning of political activity for different constituencies and (2) the substantial factors which deter lower income groups in urban areas from participation in politics, we should employ a broader conception of political participation. This argument will be related to normative concerns about democratic responsiveness. It is now a common-place to find exhortations to vote accompanying election campaigns. Such urgings no doubt have some impact;<sup>2</sup> however, many other factors account for variance in participation. In particular the social situation and political



experience of the individual influences his perceptions of political life in a general and underlying way. As a result of such influences some are more likely to respond to these exhortations. It is to these underlying influences that my attention is devoted. I am willing to accept for my purposes here, the general proposition that government will tend to be more responsive as participation increases. Then I want to go a step further and argue that the extent to which the government is perceived as responsive and accessible is a vital determinant of participation levels. The perception of governmental responsiveness is closely related to the sense of personal political efficacy. In such matters experience is most often considered to be a wise teacher. Those who have been unsuccessful in their dealings with government will come to perceive government as nonresponsive and have low feelings of political efficacy. In such instances voting may become a ritualistic but quite meaningless form of political involvement. To engender greater and more meaningful participation in such cases would seem to call for a revitalization of governmental responsiveness and personal political efficacy. I will argue that this revitalization will only come about when we have come to comprehend the relationship between social situation and political perceptions.

Some initial problems of definition and scope arise here and the remainder of this Introduction will serve to set forth major reasons for my argument, indicate which questions will be excluded, and to present stipulative definitions of the major concepts which are central to the thesis.



## 1.2 Participation and Responsiveness

The question of participation and responsiveness of government is involved with a difficult circularity, the resolution of which may well be necessary to the intelligent discussion of either of these concepts. The word "participation" will appear here in a general sense, including the regular and periodic ways in which publics intend to influence government. This includes voting, party work of many varieties, following public affairs, discussing social and political issues, and a wide range of infrequently political activities such as talking to friends about major day-to-day problems. One of the major problems with the discipline of political science has been that many of the important terms which together constitute the subject matter of the discipline are most often defined stipulatively for the purposes of a particular inquiry if at all. Partly because of this, it seems necessary that the above phrase "and a wide range of infrequently political activities" be employed as part of a stipulative definition of participation, because the question of what can properly be considered "political" activity remains open, and receives different answers in different contexts. A rigorous definition of participation does not seem central to my purposes, at least at the outset, because the poor do not concern themselves for the most part with the activities usually taken to be forms of political participation.

The social and political life of the urban ghetto is affected daily by decisions and actions of government; however, the involvement



of the urban poor in these processes is only nominal and for the most part, receptive. In an age of increasingly complex governmental organization and decision-making the extent to which the individual citizen influences government in a direct and readily perceivable manner is very small and periodic at best. When we look at the urban poor as a group however, it is clear that even in aggregate terms, few of their members vote. Voting can be construed as the most rudimentary general way in which citizens express public preferences. Thus in conceiving of participation as voting, party activity, running for office and lobbying, we are conceptualizing political participation in a manner which virtually excludes the urban poor.

#### 1.2.1 Voting

Voting can be considered from two perspectives. On the one hand, voting is considered an expression of support for the political system.<sup>3</sup> According to this perspective the individual expresses his faith in the ability and value of the political system by the act of voting. He indicates his belief that the system will respond to him by expressing his preferences through the vote. In cases where the individual is involved in higher, more elaborate and active forms of political activity, he becomes a political actor, a part of the ongoing political process. Most of those who are involved in political activities beyond voting are strongly committed to democratic values. Thus when we concern ourselves with participation and consider primarily those activities which require at least, the level of political efficacy which is generally necessary for



the act of voting, a great deal of the background to public political actions and nonactions has been excluded. This is particularly evident when we look at the political life of the urban poor.

According to a second perspective the act of voting is most often the expression of dissatisfaction as in "protest votes". As we suggested above, unless such dissatisfactions are politicized, if only in the act of voting, they remain outside the parameters of a concept of participation which excludes the social background to nonparticipation.

#### 1.2.2 Participation→Responsiveness

The circularity referred to above revolves around two propositions, both of which are held to be generally true. Firstly, when citizens participate in politics, responsiveness of government is fostered. That is governmental and political decision makers are better able to "respond" to demands when citizens concern themselves with public life and pursue goals through public means. Decision makers consider "real" (which is to say, articulated) interests when citizens do this. If the political process is construed in functional "input-output" terms, the inputs are presumably more accurate if they are articulated by citizens rather than hypothesized, estimated or projected by political leaders. A rudimentary precondition in determining what citizens want and how to satisfy as many wants as possible, or satisfy wants in the "best" way, is to have citizens articulate their wants. This articulation occurs in a variety of ways. What is desirable however, in terms of potential and



real responsiveness of government, is that the "raw material" processed by government in the "conversion process" be as accurate as possible. Government is often said to be faced with the task of establishing priorities among wants articulated by various publics. (It need not follow, but in most cases it presumably will, that a government will be considered more responsive the more it is effectively able to work towards the satisfaction of as many wants as possible.) Decision makers employ some criteria for the allocation of public funds and the establishment of priorities and there need not be anything like congruity between the criteria employed by government and the considerations which motivate groups of citizens. It would seem, however that the probability of government responding in a manner which best approximates the pursuit of private interests will increase as a function of the extent to which decision makers are aware of private interests.

### 1.2.3 Responsiveness → Participation

The second part of the circularity is the proposition that when government is "responsive", and more particularly when government is seen as responsive, participation will be fostered. This seems clear enough although the use of the word "responsive" is ambiguous. It is not immediately clear what might be the distinguishing attributes of responsive government. Presumably groups are still able to see government as more willing to satisfy demands from groups other than themselves, in a manner that is no different than one which could be called non-responsive government. Unless we are willing to call responsive only that government which



satisfies all interests, we appear to be faced with major difficulties in using "responsive" in anything more than a laudatory sense with no clear and demonstrable empirical meaning.<sup>4</sup> Bearing this in mind, "responsiveness" here will be treated primarily in terms of minimal and initial requisites or preconditions--that at least those who have interests, (which in theory would include most everyone) articulate demands which they consider to be important to political and/or governmental personnel. This may not be to say very much, but at least this concern implies a communications advancement beyond the situation where some interests are not directly heard, with the necessary corollary that decision-makers are, as was noted above, in a position where the interests of some groups, one of which we investigate here, are discernible only through processes which involve something like estimation or projection.

Governments also ask groups about their interests, although there are problems here with who are to be considered proper spokesmen. These kinds of doubts would not arise if all major groups were actively engaged in the public pursuit of some of their ("public") interests. This problem becomes particularly evident in cases where some groups are considered particularly disadvantaged (for whatever reasons).

### 1.3      Self Interested Political Activity

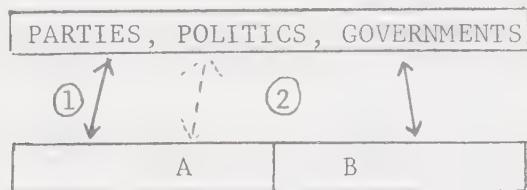
My focus will be in terms of self protection, self interested political activity rather than with altruistic "ideal regarding"<sup>5</sup> kinds of orientations. Raymond Wollheim treats these two kinds of orientations



in his essay concerned with the ways in which political preferences can be construed. Firstly, he notes, an individual may say to government, "I want X," (because that will be good for me). In a second case, he may say, "I want X", (because that will be good for society). It is possible, of course, that although these two propositions state different particular motives, they are reducible to one motive or demand. This is the case, for example, when the correct statement of motive is "government should do X because I want X, and what is good for me is good for society." Such an instance involves the identification of particular and general interests in the mind of the agent and may not be an accurate representation of an actual "good" action of government. In any event such considerations are not central here. Rather, I am concerned with more particular requisites for the representation of all demands whether those demands are particular or general in motivation.

#### 1.4 A Free Marketplace of Demands

In a simplified form, the argument can be represented with the help of a diagram as follows:



We are primarily concerned with group A, "the poor", who live in central city areas and who are defined by some per capita income category and the perception that they are poor. We are not primarily concerned with



the source of income but with its stability. We are not concerned with those who are temporarily poor, or with variance in the ability of the members of this group to adapt to their poverty because of ethnic, life style preference or other factors. The situation is characterized by the fact that to the extent that concern with the interests, welfare, etc., of group A is a politically tenable consideration for governmental decision-makers, the estimation arrow (2) is the process through which the interests of this group are perceived by the governmental decision-makers. (In more general terms, the poor can be seen as a group, who are representative of those for whom this is to a greater or lesser extent the situation.)

Now the question arises about the real interests of this group. Here I present my second stipulation which also will serve to limit the focus of the discussion. It may well be the case that the estimations of the real interests of group A by political leaders are more workable than the actual articulations of group A; however the proof of such an assertion would seem to be a major undertaking. In fact there exists legitimate doubt as to what would constitute a proof of an assertion, as to "real" interests. Much more satisfactory is a situation where political decision makers are not possibly to be faced with anything like a request to prove their ability to discern real interests of "unspeaking" citizens. I will delineate significant factors which have an effect on the perception of politics from poverty, such that we may become able to treat the causes of non-participation, thus removing the "need" for arrow (2). This will facilitate the realization of what might be called a "free



marketplace of demands". This is the framework of the discussion and the goal towards which it is directed.

### 1.5 The Argument

The general argument can be presented by means of five propositions. (1) The poor have been for the most part unsuccessful in their private affairs. This is treated here as part of my general definition of poverty. (2) As a result, they are more dependent on the public political system for assistance in achieving material well-being and other basic goals. (3) Politics however, is seen as irrelevant, ineffective, and cumbersome. (4) Therefore the poor withdraw to "private worlds", their perceptions of politics based on cynicism and frustration. (5) As a result of this withdrawal from public, the interests of the urban poor are not pursued in the public arena as many other interests are. (6) In terms of our approaches to the non-participation of the urban poor in the political system, we should understand the relationship between the social situation, political experience and political perceptions of this group. Only subsequent to such an undertaking will recommendations intending to increase the participation of the urban poor deal with the roots of a complex social and political situation. A valuable by-product of such an understanding will be some advancement towards an explanation of anomie outbursts of political expression. Anomie activity is similar to lobbying in a sense, but lacks the rudimentary measure of political sophistication and rationality which characterizes the more regularized activities of many interest groups. As well,



anomie activity is characterized by a high level of emotionalism and intermittent violent expressions of sentiment.

### 1.6 Organization of the Discussion

My discussion will be organized as follows. Chapter one will discuss the status of participation as a concept in democratic theory. This treatment will not be general, but rather will focus on the particular question of whether participation can be most effectively be construed as an instrumental or a terminal value, that is, something valued in itself, or something valued in terms of goals it can be said to foster. In fact I argue that it should be employed in both senses, but that Lester W. Milbrath's failure to assign a vital and important status to the concept in either way results in an unfortunate implicit tendency to discuss questions of democratic theory in a manner which loses sight of important human values which are generally taken to be central to our general meaning of democracy. In the second chapter I develop some of the suggestions of the first chapter in the context of a more general discussion of political science conceptualizations of participation, with particular reference to the status of the urban poor in the political system. Chapter three focuses on social determinants of the nonparticipation of the poor in political life and chapter four deals with some important bureaucratic determinants of that nonparticipation.



### 1.7 The Urban Poor

My discussion focuses on the urban poor and excludes the rural poor, firstly because they are comparatively small in numbers<sup>6</sup> and secondly because their geographic dispersal compared to the urban poor tends to suggest that although one can generalize only with considerable caution about poor people in urban situations, generalizations are even more dangerous in the case of the rural poor, who are in less frequent contact with each other and presumably as a result, less alike in their political experience and orientations.

### 1.8 The Postulation of Goals

Not central to my purposes here is the postulation of a set of goals which can be more effectively realized as a result of suggestions which I argue here. That is to say, it is not my intention to set forth a program of action for "a" or "the" poor. Such possibilities are no doubt as variable as the diverse neighbourhoods which constitute my subject matter. Nor do I feel committed to exhorting the urban poor to pursue a particular strategy with respect to various means of approach, levels of government, private agencies, and the like. What does seem likely as a general phenomenon however, is the "winning of special concessions from city hall to remedy specific neighbourhood problems".<sup>7</sup> James Q. Wilson among others develops a distinction between private and public-regarding orientations to political life to which I have already made reference. In this discussion of Saul D. Alinsky, he notes that Alinsky



appeals to the self interest of the local residents and to their resentment and distrust of the outside world". If residents do not have what I have called a "public regarding" ethos, Alinsky is perfectly willing to appeal to their "private regarding" ethos and to capitalize on the fact that collective action among such people is possible only when each person fears some threat to his own interests.

By stimulating and focusing such fears, an organization is created which can then compel other organizations--such as the sponsors of an urban renewal project--to bargain with it.

### 1.9 The "Political" and the "Bureaucratic"

Political organization need not be directed in this way but there appear to be substantial reasons why those who are poor and reside in "downtown" areas of large cities find themselves in a situation where this particular kind of pragmatic incremental approach seems attractive. This is related to Peter Lupsha's more general argument that blacks and poor citizens have been shunted "out of partisan politics and into the agency and administrative politics of welfare on the OEO".<sup>9</sup> I will distinguish the "political" from the "administrative" arena and argue that most contacts with the political system are bureaucratic and particular rather than more "political" and general. This is not to say that other groups are more involved with general aspects of political life than are the poor, but more particularly to suggest that the more immediate and accessible approaches are bureaucratic and administrative rather than electoral and partisan political. These are matters of degree in any event, but there is a clear sense in which it can be said that the poor are "administered" more than they are "governed" in a traditional way.



#### 1.10 Interests of the Poor

It is recognized that general talk about the "interests" of "the poor" is difficult to the point that exceptions and qualifications are usually entered as appendices to any general statement to the extent that the meaning of the general statement becomes largely lost. This has to do with who is to be called the poor and what are considered to be their interests. To avoid these major difficulties I define the poor in a general economic sense, more particularly as those who perceive themselves as poor. I treat their interests as whatever interests may emerge, which is to say, become articulated by agencies operating in poverty areas which are constituted in their membership for the most part by residents. These stipulations of usage are not precise to be sure, but they are adequate to the purposes of this discussion because my focus is more general, pertaining to questions of responsiveness and participation which apply to an aggregate social grouping. That is to say, my concern is with a general situation and the dominant characteristics of that situation.

#### 1.11 The Concept of Responsiveness

Both participation and responsiveness are major elements of democratic theory and I will treat them here as particularly important in discussing the urban poor. The circularity which revolves around these two concepts has been mentioned above. Responsiveness of government to the particular interests of the poor will be discussed in Chapter I in terms of a perspective which tends to de-emphasize the role of



participation as a means to governmental responsiveness. Democratic stability is clearly a significant goal; however, it can be emphasized excessively to the point that governmental responsiveness receives less attention than it should. This, I argue, is particularly the case when there exist major social groups which are both clearly disadvantaged and do not concern themselves for the most part with orthodox forms of political expression. This is partly because they perceive it as an ineffective means to pursue most individual and group goals. Such a perception I argue is accurate to a considerable extent and thus provides an important basis for anomie forms of political activism. To come to terms with the social and bureaucratic determinants of this perspective, a broader notion of the relationship between social situation and participation must be employed. A narrow conception which treats voting and partisan party activity as the most important, probable, and consequential forms of expressing political interests ignores the variation which exists in the experiential and social environment, such that we are unable to come to terms with differences in the significance of political action for different constituencies. This general argument I apply and attempt to document in the case of the urban poor.

Let me delineate three problems which are recognized and treated in a manner which is not intended to be satisfactory or comprehensive.

#### 1.12 Latent Groups

Firstly, there is a clear sense in which the poor are, and will no doubt remain in most cases, a latent group, unorganized and seldom publicly



pursuing common interests. This is not unlike the sense in which, say, smokers of cigarettes form a latent group in that they can be said to have common interests but fail to pursue those interests in a concerted manner. One of the problems with the notion of "latent" groups is that there are no clear general criteria to apply in determining which groups are to remain latent, and which are not. There was a time when plumbers, for example were considered a latent group and there is a sense in which those who make up the civil rights movement can be considered only a latent group. One of the considerations which can be employed to distinguish latent from real groups is whether or not the group is organized in some formal and/or effective way. Another consideration involves the perception and subsequently the pursuit of common interests. Some groups are formally organized in some structure, but are not actively engaged in the pursuit of goals valued by members of the group. Subsequently more political questions pertain to the effectiveness of an active and formally organized association of individuals. These questions seem to be tactical or strategic, and involve important questions about political resources and skills. Such questions are of no small importance for the poor, but will receive only peripheral attention here. Questions about the poor and the political system can be raised about (1) their lack of political expertise, and (2) salient characteristics of their social and political situation, i.e., factors which are most important in defining their political status. I will be primarily concerned with (2) which includes discussion of why the poor constitute a latent group in some ways, and a real group in others. What is crucial to the difference is the



conscious and organized pursuit of interests which are seen as special, that is worthy of particular active and organized attention. This involves rudimentary efforts intended to be "self" protecting and the perception of forces which are external and hostile, or at least not compatible with whatever are seen to be the important interests of the poverty group in question. Such concerns with self protection most frequently involve basic issues such as housing, employment, social services, and the like. To the extent that I am arguing in support of a particular strategy, to the exclusion of others, the notion of "community" unionism probably applies. Although there are major difficulties with the analogy to trade unionism, it is important to recognize that those whose interests are "special" in the sense of particular, are served best by learning to effectively employ rewards and sanctions in a political arena.

### 1.13 Ethnicity and Poverty

Some of the groups which do exist and function in poverty areas are ethnic groups. Intergenerational upward mobility by means of ethnic associations and the political machine have been a significant phenomenon, particularly in U.S. Eastern cities. Such advancements have been predominantly individual in form, although they have affected large numbers over time. What is also important here, however, is the persistence of an underclass of variant and various ethnic composition despite the general upward movement of new Americans. This persistence suggests a structural pattern, one which has important and obvious political implications.



Secondly, there exists a clear danger that increased political involvement in urban poverty areas will result in an increase in political antagonism among ethnic groups, particularly in the case of black-white antagonisms. Such possibilities are not unique to poverty areas, nor do they appear to be of such consequence that the goal of greater general governmental responsiveness engendered by means of higher levels of political participation should be abandoned, or postponed until such time as potential ethnic antagonisms appear to have declined in magnitude. Clearly this raises questions about the quality as well as the quantity of political involvement, questions which although they can be applied to the ethnic character of big city politics, are not equally of clear and demonstrated vital significance to the income discrepancies which also characterize big city political and economic life.

#### 1.14 Poverty and Powerlessness

Thirdly it is important to distinguish between poverty and powerlessness. I argue that each is of no small consequence in reinforcing the other. I also argue that the reinforcement of these two dimensions of the situation of the urban poor is systemic in character. More particularly, I argue that in addition to the upward mobility measures pursued by government, which may result in greater participation on the part of those who have advanced economically, we must explore the possibilities of fostering the political power exercised by those who are poor. Such an approach should involve more than just a formal decentralization of governmental agencies, although I will argue that



this measure should foster participation. "M]ost proposals of decentralization. . . would involve maintaining the central administration as it now is and creating another layer of bureaucracy underneath somewhere. . . ."<sup>10</sup> This tends to become a very debatable proposal, because what is clearly involved is the proposition that extensive social resources of many kinds must be made available to low income residents for allocation as they themselves determine. It is here that a great deal of controversy arises in connection with the American war on poverty, its scope and implementation.

### 1.5 The Systemic and the Individual Level

There are two distinct levels at which these questions of poverty and powerlessness can be approached. Firstly, there are systemic considerations. Secondly, the notion of self determination can be applied with very particular implications in the context of problems of poverty. We should be very clear when we discuss this issue, that aspects of the question which have to do with fostering democratic responsiveness and/or stability are quite separate from concerns about the constituency that I am calling the poor. In other words, we can urge greater participation of the poor in political life (1) to increase general systemic, responsiveness and/or (2) to facilitate the advancement of the poor. In a sense, it is irresponsible to discuss the self determination of the poor without regard for more general and systemic considerations. Thus Chapters II and III are more general in focus than the particular empirical issues treated in Chapters IV and V. The focus is general because the situation of the urban poor vis-à-vis the political system



can to some extent be traced to a general preference for systemic stability above considerations of democratic responsiveness. Chapter III deals with concepts because prescriptions about governmental responsiveness must centrally involve a concept of participation. Such a concept must be relevant to the context of political action and nonaction, which is to say, it must include and comprehend variance in the "meaning" of political actions of various kinds for various constituencies. To take a simple analogy, it is irresponsible in a sense to argue prudence and equity to a starving population confronted with a completely inadequate amount of food. In a similar way it is irresponsible and superficial to urge the poor to vote as a means of resolving personal difficulties, without regard for their previous experience with the orthodox forms of political expression and their social situation.

#### 1.16 The Relationship Between the Conceptual and the Empirical Parts of the Discussion

On the face of it this seems clear enough. What is perhaps not so clear is the relationship between Chapters II and III on the one hand, and Chapters IV and V on the other. In a sense the first two chapters provide a reason for the argument of the latter two. In Chapter II, I argue that in general terms, we should be concerned with the responsiveness of democratic institutions more than is suggested by perspectives of which Milbrath's is taken as representative.<sup>11</sup> In Chapter III, I argue that this concern with responsiveness is intimately related to the way in which participation is conceptualized. High levels of involvement is



seen as an important aspect of ensuring responsiveness of political leaders in particular and government in general. As a result, citizens are urged to participate in political life in many ways. But exhortations to vote are often quite pointless if citizens see participation as a nonproductive method to influence government. Therefore I argue, we should comprehend those factors in the social situation of various groups which mitigate against the perception of participation as an effective means to ensure governmental responsiveness. Chapters IV and V are intended to sketch those factors in the case of the urban poor. Inquiry directed at the comprehension of the relationship between the urban poor and the political system is, no doubt, a worthwhile venture in itself. The argument here, however provides a particular purpose for such an inquiry, which is the need to increase governmental responsiveness. Central to higher responsiveness is more involvement. In Chapter III, I argue that we will best be able to advance recommendations which will foster higher levels of participation among the urban poor in particular, when we employ as our concept of participation one which is broad enough to accommodate variance in the significance of various forms of participation for different groups. This variance stems from the relationship between social situation and experiences with the political process and government institutions.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC THEORY

#### 2.1 The Argument of this Chapter

In this Chapter I want to contrast two perspectives on democracy in order to clarify what I take to be a necessary emphasis on governmental responsiveness ensured by means of high levels of citizen involvement in the political process. I will argue that participation is to be valued both as an indicator of preferences and as a means to facilitate the effective allocation of social resources to the problems of the disadvantaged. In general, I argue against a perspective which values stability of government above responsiveness of government. I will argue that participation is to be valued on two grounds. Firstly, a political process in which individuals and groups participate extensively in influencing public policy is one which we are generally willing to call democratic. This however, says very little. We value democracy as a means of government which is intended to satisfy interests.<sup>1</sup> Participation and responsiveness come together when interests are satisfied by government. In a sense, the stability of that government is a secondary consideration, certainly until public order and social activity cease altogether. We are clear that stability is seen as secondary by those whose interests are not satisfied and who do not see government as responsive to them. We should be careful to distinguish two values which we attach to participation: firstly as an important element of a



democratic political process, and secondly as a means to facilitate the satisfaction of interests.

## 2.2 Lester W. Milbrath's Perspective on Participation

In the summary of his book Political Participation, Lester W. Milbrath recapitulates his argument by noting the following:

(1) Most citizens in any political society do not live up to the classical democratic prescription to be interested in, informed about, and active in politics. (2) Yet, democratic governments and societies continue to function adequately. (3) It is a fact that high participation is not required for successful democracy. (4) However, to insure responsiveness of officials, it is essential that a sizable percentage of citizens participate in choosing their public officials. (5) Maintaining open channels of communication in the society also helps to insure responsiveness of officials to public demands. (6) Moderate levels of participation by the mass of citizens help to balance citizen roles as participants and as obedient subjects. (7) Moderate levels of participation also help balance political systems which must be both responsive and powerful enough to act. (8) Furthermore, moderate participation levels are helpful in maintaining a balance between consensus and cleavage in society. (9) High participation levels would actually be detrimental to society if they tended to politicize a large percentage of social relationships. (10) Constitutional democracy is most likely to flourish if only a moderate proportion of social relationships (areas of life) are governed by political considerations. (11) Moderate or low participation levels by the general public place a special burden or responsibility on political elites for the successful functioning of constitutional democracy. (12) Elites must adhere to democratic norms and rules of the game and have a live-and-let-live attitude toward their opponents. (13) A society with widespread apathy could easily be dominated by an unscrupulous elite; only continuous vigilance by at least a few concerned citizens can prevent tyranny. (14) Elite recruitment and training is an especially important function. (15) To help insure final control of the political system by the public, it is essential to maintain an open communications system, to keep gladiator ranks open to make it easy for citizens to become active should they so choose, to continue moral admonishment for citizens to become active, and to keep alive the democratic myth of citizen competence. (my emphasis throughout)<sup>2</sup>

In statement two, the important word would seem to be "adequately",



implying one of at least two possibilities. Firstly, "adequately" as used in this context may represent a view as to what is a necessary condition for what is being called, in some sense, a "democratic" polity. This suggests that there are several requirements which must be met in a democratic political system. Required at least, is that "a sizable percentage of citizens participate in choosing" their leaders. This will ensure responsiveness in Milbrath's view. This is a general systemic view, indicating something about Milbrath's view as to what constitutes a democratic rather than a non-democratic political system. In statement three, Milbrath states that "it is a fact that high participation is not required for a successful democracy" (my emphasis). Statement three helps to make clear the second possibility with respect to the use of the word "adequately" in statement two. In fact, statement three can be interpreted as telling us nothing factual, but rather indicating a value commitment as to what constitutes a "successful democracy" or an "adequate" functioning of a "democratic" system. Milbrath's commitments in these statements, whether interpreted as value commitments as to democracy, or empirical statements about system maintenance or functioning, are clearly at a systemic level, telling us about Milbrath's perspective on the larger political system, without special regard for particular groups in that system. Milbrath presents an instrumental view on participation which can be formulated as follows: (a) x level of participation is a necessary condition for the functioning of the political system (involving some commitment--unspecified--as to what constitutes the political "system", and its "functioning"). (b) x level of participation is a necessary condition for "democracy" (value commitment, or definitional property



of democracy). No attempt is being made here to reduce Milbrath's statements to an over-simplified form, but rather to present them in their basic substance in order to isolate and specify the particular commitments which are being set forth. It should be clear that Milbrath would allow such statements as: (c) y level of participation is a necessary condition for the maintenance of the political system but not a necessary condition for democracy, and (d) y level of participation is a necessary condition for democracy but not a necessary condition for the maintenance of the political system. This possibility is suggested by statements 9 and 10. Milbrath conceives of a minimum level of participation in choosing leaders as necessary to ensure responsiveness (statement four), and a maximum level of participation to ensure that a balance is maintained between popular participation and obedience, and between consensus and cleavage (statement eight). Statement (c) above, would apply in instances where the level of participation achieved in choosing leaders was not adequate to ensure responsiveness of officials. Statement (d) would apply in instances where the level of participation exceeded a particular level, destroying the balance between consensus and cleavage and/or the balance between "citizens roles as participants and as obedient subjects". We arrive at Milbrath's concern that "only a moderate proportion of social relationships are governed by political considerations". Milbrath argues that "high participation levels would actually be detrimental to society if they tended to politicize a large percentage of social relationships". Thus his instrumental evaluation of participation would seem to be directly related to the notion of "social balance", whereby a functioning system which he considers to meet with the requirements necessary to his meaning of democracy will operate. Milbrath



wants to see communication fostered, the ranks of political gladiators kept open, citizens morally admonished to become active, and the democratic myth of citizen competence kept alive (statement fifteen). Participation in the political system is seen as a means to the higher end of responsiveness but should remain limited to a certain extent, in order to prevent over-politicization of social relationships. The expectations Milbrath sets forth for most citizens are fairly minimal: vigilance, voting, interest.<sup>3</sup> This general view of the political system implicitly assigns to particular components varying statuses and responsibilities. Those in urban poverty do little trade with the political system, and for the most part see party politics as a remote, ineffectual ritual with little direct relevance to their concrete political and social situations.

Milbrath records the apathy, cynicism, and non-participation of the poor<sup>4</sup> but does not attempt to deal prescriptively with this phenomenon, although other perhaps more general considerations of democracy do receive evaluative attention. This is no simple question, and Milbrath's book was not intended to deal extensively with particular groups within the political system; however, his discussion tends, sometimes explicitly but usually implicitly, to treat low levels of participation among low income groups in a manner which suggests a normative perspective which is debatable. This seems to be because of the value he attaches to systemic stability. It is possible to argue in general terms that we want to foster a democracy which is both responsive and stable, but such an argument seems to avoid the question of possible conflicts between these two values. These conflicts often do arise as we discuss particular concrete issues. Milbrath is understandably concerned to achieve a



workable balance between these values, and his general perspective seems quite acceptable as a theoretical formulation. Difficulties arise however, when questions are posed in particular terms which involve conflicts between these two normative principles. (This question can be treated in empirical rather than prescriptive terms but the substance of the conflict can, I think, be treated more directly when it is posed in normative terms.) Evaluative premises should not be removed from the proper scope of inquiry because they are not explicitly stated. Rather, the identification of evaluative premises becomes an important task which serves to clarify the elements and structure of the argument. As well, only subsequent to the determination of the evaluative premises is it possible to conduct an analysis of the logic of the argument. In the case of Milbrath, his concern is substantially empirical, having to do with presenting findings about participation. He does however, offer prescriptions in the passage above. He sets forth prescriptions which in their general terms attempt to achieve a balance between responsiveness and stability. (It has not however, been argued that these two goals or values sit at poles of a continuum in an empirical or an evaluative way.) He has previously noted that the political system does not respond to the poor for a variety of reasons.<sup>5</sup> In the light of the situation of the poor, it becomes clear that Milbrath's general preference for a "balance" mitigates against possibilities of his treating extensively the particular subject of governmental responsiveness to the poor. That is to say, the choice he has made here is more one of evaluative operating principles than one of subject matters. Such, at least, is one possible conclusion. A second (perhaps more realistic) possibility is that Milbrath wants to



foster participation of the poor to engender responsiveness up to the point at which greater participation threatens the stability of the political system. This possibility seems more satisfactory; however, it may not be Milbrath's position at all because of his view that we now have a "successful" democracy. This view suggests that we now have the proper balance between responsiveness and stability, a suggestion which gives rise to the concerns voiced in this chapter. Also of importance here is Milbrath's suggestion that we foster (only) the myth of citizen competence. From this it seems reasonable to conclude that he views greater participation as either: (a) not possible (an empirical claim), or (b) not desirable an (evaluative claim). My response to this suggestion is that more participation is both desirable and possible. In fact, the disadvantageement of some groups, particularly groups which fail to participate, provides an important reason for arguing that greater participation (of these groups in particular) is desirable.

Let me elaborate on some of the possible implications of Milbrath's implicit instrumental evaluation of participation. In simplified form, an instrumental view takes the following form:

x is important (valuable, functional, necessary) to the presence  
(realization, maintenance) of y.

or "freedom" is a means to "happiness".

X is said to be of value not as a goal in its own right, but in-so-far as it is considered to be necessary for the presence of y. Alternate perspectives could see participation as a means to the development of widespread experience with political life, or as a means to the social



and economic advancement of those who participate.

### 2.3 T.B. Bottomore's Perspective

In T.B. Bottomore's short work, Elites and Society, Bottomore presents his conclusion that the preservation and improvement of a democratic system of government

does not depend primarily upon fostering the competition between small elite groups whose activities are carried on in realms far removed from the observation or control of ordinary citizens, but upon creating and establishing the conditions in which a large majority of citizens, if not all citizens can take part in deciding those social issues which vitally affect their lives--at work, in the local community, and in the nation--and in which the distinction between elites and masses is reduced to the smallest possible degree.<sup>6</sup>

Although this conclusion can be characterized in its general terms as one which views participation as part of Bottomore's meaning of democracy, the emphasis placed on social involvement in decision-making processes affecting day-to-day affairs indicates a more demanding view as to what constitutes a democratic system of decision-making. In Milbrath's conceptualization, moderate levels of participation in choosing leaders<sup>7</sup> is important to ensure responsiveness, whereas for Bottomore, a more vigorous participation in decision-making is considered a vital aspect of the democratic process. The tenability of Bottomore's suggestion on anything other than a very small scale seems dubious.<sup>8</sup> His position on this issue, however, tends to be one which does not forcet the possibility of appreciably higher levels of involvement in processes of decision-making on the part of many groups. More prescriptive options seem to be left open because of his emphasis. Bottomore is more concerned with democratic processes of decision making, Milbrath more with the



stability of democratic governments.

Bottomore goes on to argue that

It is a notable feature of theories based on limited notions of political participation that having defined democracy as a form of government of a whole society and thus excluded from the definition any non-political factors such as appear, for example, in the notions of "social democracy", or "industrial democracy", they go on to eliminate so far as possible even a consideration of the influence which factors of this kind may have on the form of government itself.<sup>9</sup>

This emphasis on the definition of democracy as "a form of government of a whole society" brings us back to the systemic definition of democracy and the acceptance of limited roles of participants for particular groups which are secondary to requirements set forth in the general definition. This approach tends to relegate a dependent, or at least not a primary role, to citizens as participants.

#### 2.4 Differences in Perspective

This difference of orientation which implies evaluative disagreements is related to a general point about functional analysis argued by Carl Hempel.

For the sake of objective testability of functional hypotheses, it is essential. . . that definitions of needs or functional prerequisites be supplemented by reasonably clear and objectively applicable criteria of what is considered to be a healthy state or a normal working order of the system under consideration; and that the vague and relative notion of survival then be construed in the relativized sense as survival in a healthy state as specified.<sup>10</sup>

Although Milbrath's treatment is not in functional terms, and although he clearly does not want to maintain that the poor should remain poor and non-participant, because of his concern with democratic stability,



his discussion implies a formal ranking of major democratic values which is something like the following:

social balance--stability  
responsiveness--participation  
citizen well-being

Perhaps this representation appears harsh and distorted because it is formalized, but my point, although overstated, should be clear.

As we have noted, differences in the orientations of Milbrath and Bottomore are, to a considerable extent, attributable to different emphases as to what constitutes a "healthy" state of a democratic political system. On another level, we should heed the warning of Chalmers Johnson that "In order to portray the changed society, we must explore the dis-equilibrated social system in both its systemic (macrocosmic) and personal (microcosmic) dimensions."<sup>11</sup> Quite conceivable is a political system in which there is systemic health and personal "disease", a state of affairs which Bottomore's conceptualization of democracy, and his general orientation would seem more concerned with.

If we analyse the political system in terms of its impact of the non-participant poor it becomes clearer that Milbrath's approach tends to ignore, if not rationalize a differential in political citizenship which is directly related to socio-economic class, co-incidental with a not particularly rigorous set of requirements set forth for a healthy democracy. The tension between responsiveness and stability has been a persistent problem in democratic theory and democratic practice. We should be clear that groups occupy positions which are more or less



disadvantaged within the "democratic" polity. The urban poor are treated here as one particularly disadvantaged group, who are representative of more general patterns of non-participation and non-responsiveness. Some of the roots of this phenomena may well be related to the way participation is generally construed relative to other democratic values. There are important reasons why we should be concerned to evaluate responsiveness and stability as values centrally involved in political democratic theory quite apart from considerations of disadvantage, social and political equity, and the like. It is not possible however to argue convincingly in general terms for one value above the other. Thus particular applications cannot be responsibly be conducted on the basis of a general verdict. The debate is of major significance when it comes to considering approaches to poverty, powerlessness and non-participation. I have suggested that the argument will be most profitably pursued if it is undertaken in the empirical terms of reference provided by study of the situation of a particular constituency. Certainly the nature of the conflict becomes clearer in both its basic dimensions and its consequences, when the discussion is particular and concrete rather than general and more abstract. It is quite possible that Milbrath failed to appreciate the particular consequences to which he indirectly, but clearly committed himself with his notion of balance. His theoretical notion of balance readily become a practical preference for stability above responsiveness, a development which is no doubt clearly to be seen in the political perceptions of the urban poor who are non-participant because the political system is seen as substantially stable and unresponsive.



## 2.5 The Politicization of Social Life

Another notion of Milbrath's merits particular attention here. Milbrath sees dangers in the excessive politicization of social life, a suggestion which implies a distinction between public and private matters. The distinction has become increasingly important in questions of democratic theory and appropriately so. Activities of government affect groups in different ways and degrees. Groups receiving welfare for example, stand in a more direct relationship to government than groups whose incomes are received in more private ways. In one sense then, the activities of government are of differential significance to different groups. Interests become politicized when they are articulated publicly and become the subject of political debate and governmental consideration. In a sense, it seems clear that the possibility of particular interests becoming politicized is a function of the extent to which governmental policy is of direct consequence to those interests. This is not to say anything about the perception of this possibility or about the probability of politicization but it does set down an important aspect of the objective definition of the situation of various groups. Thus, in a way it can be argued that for some groups (such as those who receive welfare) social life is already excessively politicized. For other groups, social life is politicized only in marginal ways. These suggestions do not speak directly to prescriptive questions but rather to an objective variance in areas of social life which are politicized for various groups. If these suggestions are applied to Milbrath's general point about over-politicization, it seems important to enter two qualifications. Firstly,



Milbrath does not speak to questions about the social results of politicization. Presumably the politicization of an issue implies that for someone, interests become politicized in order that they will be satisfied. That is, to the extent that government is seen as an effective and responsive means for the satisfaction of private concerns, interests are made political or channelled into the political process. In these days of the regulatory state, it is often argued that the absence of government activity in an area of social life is as much a policy as a particular governmental activity represents policy. In these instances whatever is the case, is acceptable to government. This view is clearly oversimplified because it ignores differences in the effectiveness of groups in impressing upon government the need for a policy other than noninvolvement in particular areas. These are questions about the responsiveness of government as well as the effectiveness of interest groups. Milbrath's discussion does not treat these questions directly, perhaps because they are peripheral to his concerns; however, it seems clear that considerations of governmental responsiveness and effectiveness are of vital significance to any general view about over-politicization. As was the case above, I argue that these are questions which cannot be responsibly treated only in their general theoretical terms in isolation from considerations of political and social context. This clearly relates to Milbrath's preference for stability over responsiveness.

Secondly, Milbrath might do well to consider the possibility of the politicization of social life for those who are of high income to the extent that social life is politicized for those receiving welfare



for example. The systemic instability of the present situation probably has more to do with the perception of ineffective government than with the extensive politicization of areas of social life for many groups. That is to say, Milbrath's general point may well have some validity, but certainly not in isolation from other factors such as considerations of governmental effectiveness and responsiveness. Social life is differentially politicized for various groups and these differences are surely of greater consequence than aggregate levels of politicization.

## 2.6 Conclusions to this Chapter

In this Chapter I have advanced an argument in favor of a concern with governmental responsiveness above considerations of stability. This view has been defended on the grounds that differential dependencies on the political system as a means of solving social and economic problems requires that in particular, government should become more responsive to the urban poor. Perhaps more directly to the point, considerations of stability and overpoliticization of social relationships are of peripheral interest at best to groups who have looked unsuccessfully to government for responses to persistent social problems. I have argued that these considerations should also be of secondary importance when we concern ourselves with greater participation as a means to ensure responsiveness of government to disadvantaged, nonparticipant groups. I will not turn to a discussion of the concept of participation which we employ when we evaluate the meaning of political activity for different groups.



## CHAPTER III

### A BROADER CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

#### 3.1 General

In this Chapter I will argue in favor of a broader concept of political participation than that which seems to be employed in most voting studies. This argument is directly motivated by the view that as the urban poor fail to vote for the most part, they are excluded from such studies. As well, when we concern ourselves with the possibility of their participation, we are faced with what is a new, and quite separate kind of inquiry into the reasons for their nonparticipation. This task requires that we explore the social and other factors which mitigate against their participation. This inquiry can be undertaken in conjunction with voting studies in a way which does not separate participation studies from studies of the bases of nonparticipation. Central to such an approach is a broader concept of participation, one which commences with the recognition that various forms of participation embody differences in meaning and significance for diverse individuals and groups. In simple terms, it seems quite clear that participation in politics is valued differently for the man who votes the Democratic ticket as a matter of habit, as compared to welfare recipients protesting a government regulation which has been the subject of great antagonism for some period of time.

We need a conceptual framework to discuss participation which is



more subject-relevant than conceptions presently employed. Adjectives such as "legitimate", and "appropriate" take on different meanings and connotations when applied to both activist and quiescent reactions of social groups which relate to the political system in different manners and at different levels. It is in this context that political science has experienced what often seems to be major conceptual difficulties, often employing the concept of anomie as a general category, applied to urban riots, vandalism, direct political actions, and community action groups of one type or another.<sup>1</sup> Often ineffective, misdirected, crude, irrational, lacking coherent demands, and poorly organized, these forms of political activism may well be the only, or most conceivable manifestation of dissatisfaction, given the milieu from which that activism arises. This discussion will argue the inappropriateness of suppositions that conceptualization of forms and levels of political participation such as Milbrath's, although applicable with considerable utility in other contexts, can be usefully applied to the relationships between poverty and politics in contemporary America. This is like a concern of David Riesman and Nathan Glazer--

current conceptions about apathy--seen in terms of failure to vote, send telegrams, to inform oneself about politics, etc.,--greatly oversimplify the problem of finding adequate ways for relating people to politics on its various levels. To seek an increase in formal political activity and information as such, without too much concern for the meaning of that activity or information, is self-deceiving. For it may blind one to the historical changes in the significance of politics for the individual which, in our opinion, have led to an increase in unconscious apathy arising as a result of congruent changes in social structure and character structure, as well as in the political sphere alone.<sup>2</sup>

That is to say, the description of an act is only complete when the intentions which motivate the act are included. Politics has different



perceived importance for various individuals and these variances are most comprehensively described in terms of perceptual rather than social realities. The social background to perceptions should, of course, be considered the major component of the explanation of perceptual variance; however, my point is more limited. We should not underestimate the perceptual context into which aggregate social and political data are fed. This may be only to say, in simple terms for example, that news bulletins from Vietnam are of varying consequences for different people, as well as perceived in different ways. Both dimensions of the impact of the news bulletins are important in explaining different interest and subsequent behavior on the part of different individuals and groups. Reisman and Glazer's phrase "concern for the meaning of that activity and information" seems to include considerations of both perceptions and consequences, two dimensions which are quite clearly related. Some considerations of consequences were treated in chapter one. We should be clear that there need not be a direct relationship at all between consequences and perceptions despite the intuitive plausibility of the view that consequences elicit perceptions of them. Such an intuitive view says everything and nothing in a sense, because what is crucial is the determination of what particular consequences are perceived, and what perceptions are most accurately related to prior objective consequences rather than other say, personal psychological factors. These are more specific questions and their answers are to be found in the dynamic between social situation and social learning. Social reality for the individual is "constructed" in a sense,<sup>3</sup> from an experiential and psychological foundation such that only some consequences for an individual



are perceived as such.<sup>4</sup> In terms of approaches to political participation, this means that some approaches are perceived as more tenable than others.

### 3.2 The Meaning of the Vote

Rokkan has noted the isolated character of the act of voting where "the individual is cut off from all his roles in the subordinate systems of the household, the neighbourhood the work organization. . . ."<sup>5</sup> Not inconceivable is the possibility that the intensity and direction of activity rooted in a stronger sense of community will yield widespread patterns of relating to politics which assign to the act of voting a minor importance and place major emphasis on more direct forms of expressing political demands and supports. Rokkan characterizes the act of voting as one which involves "no feedback to the citizens other roles in the community."<sup>6</sup> The development of a greater sense of community and social involvement among the members of groups rooted in poverty areas may well bring about a closer, more intimate relationship between social life and political action such that the periodic election of representatives is considered relatively inconsequential, rather than an important democratic privilege.<sup>7</sup> This would tend to bring about strains at other points where these individuals and groups come into direct contact with politics and government.

Any discussion of the integration of the urban poor as political participants must commence conceiving of alternate forms of political organization in major urban centers which will be more proximate and accessible to individual perceptions in the local community than is



presently the case. In E.E. Schattschneider's discussion of these issues, he argues a thesis not unlike the main argument set forth here: "massive non-voting in the United States makes sense if we think of American government as a political system in which the struggle for democracy is still going on"<sup>8</sup> now, however, about the organization of politics rather than about the right to vote. What is involved here is the accessibility of the political process at various levels and to various constituencies. Although the equation between accessibility and involvement may not be a direct and simple one, there is good empirical evidence which supports the view that political life is increasingly more accessible as one increases income level,<sup>9</sup> that this greater accessibility is perceived, and that these patterns are properly considered systemic in character. By systemic is meant regularized and generalized patterns of social life which are of such dominant importance that their revision would involve some substantial measure of aggregate readjustment.

### 3.3 The Accessibility of Political Means

Although the question of means of pursuing political goals will receive more attention in Chapter III, let me enter a note here about the systemic character of the differential in political means available to various groups. Both legitimate and illegitimate means are limited as to availability, which is to say that all social structure necessarily involves (in principle, determinable) limitations as to the possible number and types of goals realizable without more or less structural change. This is only to say that social and structural arrangements "constitute a system



in that they tend toward the maintenance of a particular pattern of interaction"<sup>10</sup> in which both learning and opportunity means are differentially available, depending on position in social structure.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.4 Socially Recognized Types of Political Behavior

Robert Lane concludes his chapter on the "Influences of Social Institutions on Political Life" by recording that "occupations which facilitate political expression are those which select people with, or which develop on the job. . . occupational roles congenial to "civic-mindedness", "ward healing", "agitation", or some other socially recognized types of political behavior"<sup>12</sup> (my emphasis). This phenomenon involves both of the points that I have just argued. Firstly, "socially recognized types of political behavior" vary from a legal orientation for example, to a trade union orientation. Lawyers are found in high numbers among political representatives as their occupation involves them directly with the letter of the law as well as its day-to-day application. Such occupational experience facilitates a pragmatic "case-by-case" approach to political questions. A trade union occupational experience in contrast, tends to encourage a political perspective which is more partisan in terms of the representation of a more homogenous and occupationally defined clientelle, a loyalty to collective rather than individualistic goals, and a proclivity for economic questions pertaining to wages and conditions of employment. These differences are only differences of degree and are far from universal, but they do provide rudimentary examples of the ways in which occupational experiences result in differing orientations



to politics. What this says about the political orientations of the urban poor is far from clear, but three suggestions should be put forth. Firstly, to the extent that individuals are employed, they will tend to adopt whatever might be the political orientations most frequently found among the members of their occupational group. Secondly, when individuals are not employed, their political orientations will tend more than other groups towards political passivity and/or sporadic outbursts of anomie activism. Thirdly, the second political orientation appears very much an aberration, even for this group.

We should recognize that methods which are conceived of as anomie in a larger view, may well possess a measure of legitimacy and social approval in a social milieu where methods directed through traditional channels are widely considered to be ineffective. Here it is profitable to heed E.E. Schattschneider's suggestion that "the forty million (non-participants) can be made to participate only in a new kind of political system based on new cleavages and about something new. . . Abstention reflects the suppression of the options and alternatives that reflect the needs of the non-participants. . . Whoever decides what the game is about, decides who can get into the game."<sup>13</sup> It should be clear here, that we are concerned with those who have yet to "enter the game", or who have played for a short time and subsequently stopped. Thus Robert Lane's notation that those who protest are those who "for the most part have been voting all along"<sup>14</sup> has to do with groupings who are much more effectively integrated than the constituency which concerns us here.

Almond and Powell deal with this consideration at one point in their



book Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. Their discussion of various forms and characters of political culture and orientation notes that

It is very difficult for a specialized bureaucracy for example, to operate effectively in a traditional society. . . If the rules of a bureaucracy are imposed on such a culture, they will soon be undermined by the persisting traditional rules<sup>15</sup> (my emphasis).

Their concept of "political subcultures" (which presumably could include subcultures which are predominantly non-political, as in traditional, parochial, and ascriptive communities, or anti-political in orientation)<sup>16</sup> and discussion of various levels to which subcultures are effectively integrated with a larger political "composite" culture is usefully related to Robert Merton's conceptualization of general (and specific) integrations of cultural goals and institutionally prescribed means for goal realization.<sup>17</sup> We have discussed the issue-orientation aspect of the failure to achieve a comprehensive integration of goals and means for their realization, suggesting that the perceived irrelevancy of politics for the forty million is a result of the extent to which a general discrepancy exists between the issues with which electoral politics has been predominantly concerned and the issues with which the forty million would have political leadership deal. Issue relevancy is; however, only one part of the problem. The second, and more important part, which stands in something of a causal relationship to the first part, has to do with the absence of means through which the forty million might effectively make known the issues and concerns they consider important, not to say means through which they might be able to participate in dealing with these issues and concerns.



I will suggest that there are good reasons as to why we should expect anomie forms of political response from poverty areas. A more proximate and accessible political process may well facilitate increased and more extensive involvement. I have suggested that this possibility is closely tied to the growth of a sense of community or common interests in poverty areas. These considerations are of no small importance to conceptualizations of political participation.

### 3.5 Conclusion to Chapter

Variance in the meaning of political activity for various groups necessitates a broader notion of participation than one that is primarily concerned with the relatively isolated political act of voting. This variance in meaning can be approached in terms of differences, for various groups, between real and perceived consequences of political actions. A systemic differential in the accessibility of various means of political action has been noted as well as a (perhaps resultant) variance in socially recognized political orientations. Thus we should perhaps be concerned to determine those political approaches which receive subcultural supports among the urban poor, and attempting to delineate major experiential and psychological antecedents of those orientations.<sup>18</sup> Such factors no doubt involve considerations of dominant political issues as well as means for the public pursuit of private concerns. What does seem clear is the need to comprehend the relationship between social situation, political experience, and perceptions of the political process, prior to the elaboration of proposals which intend to be effective in encouraging the



greater and more "successful" participation of the urban poor. The perception of a possible responsiveness of government is, as I have suggested, an important precondition for active involvement.



## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL FACTORS MITIGATING AGAINST PARTICIPATION

#### 4.1 General

In this Chapter and Chapter V my focus is primarily empirical. These chapters will be devoted to a discussion of central factors in the social situation of the urban poor which operate against possibilities of this group being effectively and actively engaged in the political process. This discussion will serve as well to set forth in outline the dominant characteristics of the social reality in which the urban poor conduct their affairs. This characterization will facilitate the attempt to propose measures which will be conducive to forms of political involvement consistent with social and political realities as perceived by the urban poor. In particular I will distinguish political from bureaucratic contacts with the political system, arguing in favor of administrative decentralization as a means of increasing government accessibility. The social situation of the urban poor is to be characterized in terms of material deprivation, lack of immediate political rewards and incentives, local status and ethnic conflicts, and dependent relations with uncoordinated government and private social agencies. These social relations are persistent and structural and result in cynicism, defeatism and withdrawal from organized political and public life. I will argue that only when we come to terms with these crucial dimensions of the social and political situation of the urban poor will we be able to responsibly discuss the effective



and extensive participation of these groups in the political process. In Chapter V, I will deal more specifically with bureaucratic aspects of this social and political situation. Any discussion of poverty and political participation must be based on a comprehension of the relationship between the urban poor and the neighbourhood situation in which they find themselves conducting many of their day-to-day affairs. We have recorded the perceived lack of responsiveness of political and bureaucratic leadership, suggesting that only when government is seen to be more responsive will the extensive participation of the urban poor in the political system become a serious possibility.<sup>1</sup> It is to be expected that constructive political activity, aimed at the realization of particular reforms will only occur in contexts where at least: 1) governmental leadership is seen as concerned and open to particular suggestion, and 2) there is a perceived expectation that some measure of satisfaction will be forthcoming. These considerations operate at several levels, two of which will be singled out here for particular attention.

#### 4.2 Political Contacts

Firstly, an important aspect of political activity is directed at general governmental policy. This can be characterized in fairly simple terms as questions as to the allocation of social resources. This type of influence can take many forms. Individuals or groups may think or feel, for a variety of possible reasons, that "x should be the case", or that "the government should do X". Important differences exist as to the motivation for these attempts to influence government. The



two most common possibilities are: 1) as a matter of social principle, belief, or feeling, of a general character based on prescriptive views as to what should be the case, and 2) as a matter of perceived personal or group interest usually without, but occasionally with regard for more general social considerations.<sup>2</sup> We characterized the relationship of government to poverty problems as a form of indirect responsiveness, instances where government decision-makers concur in the judgment of some individuals or groups that "x should be the case with respect to poverty". What more concerns us here are bases on which governmental responsiveness to problems of poverty will be responses to the effective articulation, and aggregation by the urban poor, as individuals, or as groupings, of demands based on individual or group interests.<sup>3</sup> This we are calling direct responsiveness.

#### 4.3 Bureaucratic Contacts

Secondly, "political" contacts more frequently occur with government bureaucracy. Clerks, social workers, cashiers, secretaries, and tax collectors are some of the agents of government with whom most frequent contacts occur. For many among the urban poor, the agent is the government in an important sense, as the agent is readily perceived to be representing the values and priorities of the particular institution of government, and in a more general sense, social valuations and priorities. Diffuse sources of information provide complex and confusing knowledge of remote areas of social affairs where questions of government policy are debated and decisions of a general character are made,<sup>5</sup> but for most



citizens contacts with government are concrete, personal, and particular. Thus an important distinction should be made between more general and remote political questions and more particular bureaucratic questions. The development of a more responsive and accessible bureaucracy should tend to provide means through which general policy questions are seen as less remote and unapproachable.<sup>6</sup> Certainly in the cases of the urban poor, and no doubt for others, this would seem to be a more likely means to bring about a political integration than the alternate possibility-- bringing about a perception of local bureaucracy as responsive through the development of responsiveness as to general policy matters.

We want to base the discussion of the tenability of this approach on "the identification of the major dimensions of the situation within which the person moves and explanation of how the person and the situation interact".<sup>7</sup> Political activism among the urban poor, to the extent that it exists, has been characterized as in general terms as anomie, based on feelings of powerlessness, of anonymity, of low personal self-esteem, and of disillusionment with both private and public orthodox traditional channels for goal realization.

#### 4.4 Material Deprivation, Local Conflicts

In his discussion of the search for political leadership among American Negroes, James Q. Wilson sets forth three hypotheses about the general situation of Chicago Negroes and their political leadership which can be usefully applied as "major dimensions of the situation" of the urban poor. Firstly, the "overwhelming magnitude of the problems of the



Negro area. . . usually works to lower the level of expectations and the intensity of motivation for civic action". Secondly, "life in the ghetto is one so manifestly lacking in things--material comforts--that to many people it is absurd to seek the intangible and seemingly non-existent rewards of civic leadership". Thirdly,

A dense, socially heterogenous ghetto increases the probability of conflicts of interest between various classes and strata in the community. When lower-income and upper-income groups live side-by-side advantages won for one group must often be at the expense of another group. It becomes difficult to act disinterestedly toward community goals when the costs of those goals are so evident and so personal.<sup>8</sup>

Wilson's third hypothesis parallels Melvin Tumin's principle of the "most proximate pecker"--

the most serious status clashes occur between the newly arisen group and those most proximate to them on the status-pecking order. For the emergence of the captives most threatens serious status deprivation for those most proximate to them.<sup>9</sup>

As Kenneth Clark notes, these status conflicts and differentials often become bureaucratized and institutionalized, providing the bases for the erection of "moral and ideological blocks" to those occupying lesser ranks.<sup>10</sup> As well, the ethnic character of political life in the large urban center has been the subject of a great deal of political and sociological literature. The development of both status and economic strata in the poverty area, based to a considerable extent on ethnic groupings and identifications, has tended to complicate the perception of economic status (as opposed to other statuses), which has the effect of undermining possibilities for united efforts of the poor to relate to politics directly in terms of economic demands.



Classic ethnic politics thus redefined class grievances as ethnic grievances, and deflected attention away from structural arrangements which worked to the disadvantage of not only the Irish poor, but the Italian poor, the Negro poor, etc. It is perhaps a little less painful to be exploited by one's own kind, but the resulting diminution of pain seems to blur the vision and foster the safe status quo.<sup>11</sup>

Thus we are able to delineate two separate and important limitations on the effectiveness of the urban poor in terms of their ability to direct their resources in a concerted manner towards the political system.

Firstly, we recorded the internalization of incongruities between social and personality structure. We now see a measure of conflict and expenditure of resources in terms of status values among various ethnic groups, which has the effect of directing attention away from the structural and economic character of poverty. These factors should not be underestimated.

The former often lead to privatism, submission,<sup>12</sup> and the redefinition of goals in modest personal terms,<sup>13</sup> the latter usually interfere with the development of primarily economically-oriented organizations more interested in questions of structural resource allocation than status advancements.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.5 Common Interests

Clarification of the ways in which the poor see common interests in their relations with the political system and the ways in which they do not is an important and necessary part of this discussion. Scott Greer has asserted that "At the extremely low urban pole, the local area becomes a definite community--it is a social as well as a geographical fact."<sup>15</sup>

Rokkan and Campbell cite empirical findings which, although generalizable



only with caution, indicate "the limited influence of the mass media on the political motivations of working class citizens" and the major formative influence of "the face-to-face environments of the kin group, the workplace and the secondary organizations".<sup>16</sup> This pattern is entirely consistent with the social bases of political loyalty and perspective found in other empirical studies and suggests the extent to which the advancement of the urban poor as individuals is contingent on their gathering into groupings which form the primary bases of their social interactions, and the orientation of these groupings towards the broader political system.

Herbert Gans' case study, The Urban Villager, provides a good example of a predominantly "inward-looking" lower income group who failed to perceive the dangers to their situation represented by external and larger political forces. This group obtained what services they could from governmental and private agencies but lacked an explicitly political orientation towards the larger political system of which the local agency and governmental personnel were only relatively powerless representatives. That is, no indigenous political organization existed or developed which was effective in preventing political authorities from implementing an urban renewal program which destroyed the local community and scattered residents throughout the city. Two points should be made here. Firstly, although a healthy local community existed, that community was not political in the sense that "self protection" could be achieved by means of political organization. Secondly, the dominant relationship between the urban villagers and the political system had been, and remained passive.



to the extent that what representation of indigenous interests occurred was token, indirect, and ineffectual.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.6 Political Perceptions

It seems important therefore, to distinguish two requisites of effective participation in such instances. Firstly, some sense of community, solidarity, or common interest will tend to facilitate effective political organization in some cases.<sup>18</sup> Secondly however, such a group perceiving common interests which distinguish its members from external authorities and groups, must recognize the political character of the resolution of many questions pertaining to those common interests. It is contended that these developments will foster direct rather than indirect responsiveness of government to problems of poverty. We will be interested in both the quantity (level) and the quality (character) of political participation fostered by the growth of community-based groupings of the poor. We would expect that the development of a greater sense of community and of common purpose among the poor and their effective direction of those sentiments into political channels will mark a step towards the "free market of demands" which we set as our tentative goal above. Kurt Lewin's discussion of ethnic identifications is instructive here. Lewin sees

a tendency to accept the values of the more privileged group. . . . the member of the underprivileged group therefore become excessively sensitive to everything in his group that does not conform to those values because it makes him feel that he belongs to a group whose standards are lower.<sup>19</sup>

Lewin subsequently suggests the "affirmation of identity" and the



development of a "clear and positive sense of belonging" among the members of the "underclass". These suggestions can be easily applied to urban poverty, potentially leading to a group-oriented form of social activism. This kind of social activism may well be looking for direct contact with authorities, for immediate results, and for special treatment. That activism, to the extent that it develops, will be inspired by a sense of urgency and importance not frequently found among those who participate solely in the manner of voting which receives the main attention in survey research voting studies.

#### 4.7 Indirect Power

Goldhamer and Shils make a useful distinction between direct and indirect power, employing as their criterion for distinguishing the two the number of intermediaries between the person(s) exercising the power and the person(s) over whom that power is exercised.<sup>20</sup> The application of that distinction to urban government has led Paul Goodman, for example, to argue that city administration receives integrated policy evaluation only at the top levels of bureaucracy.<sup>21</sup> Many decisions made as to the allocation of urban resources are instances of the exercise of indirect power over the urban poor. The urban poor have little, if any contact with those who make general policy decisions, for the most part dealing only with lower-level bureaucrats and private agencies. Paul Jacobs characterizes these contacts as "abrasive", or "non-supportive".<sup>22</sup> "The poor, and especially the minority poor, generally tend, in their contacts with city, county, state, and federal



government agencies, to be treated either punitively, or in ways which reinforce their feelings of dependency, and frequently both".<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.8 Decentralization of Governmental Administration

More than others, the urban poor see policy makers as remote and inaccessible.<sup>24</sup> Their direct contacts with government provide little immediate encouragement. Goodman has noted the fragmentation of city administration, arguing in favor of decentralized local administration which would "follow the actuality of living in an urban community, where housing, schooling, policing, shopping, social services, politics, are integrally related".<sup>25</sup> What this serves to suggest here is the possible creation of urban political and administrative units which will facilitate the ongoing operation of a more accessible, direct, kind of politics to which community-based, politically oriented groups might relate. This appears entirely consistent with the research finding of Riesman and Glazer that

concern with what has been, or potentially can be personally experienced is less apathetic than concern with remote items, access to which is gained through impersonal agencies of information diffusion; likewise the ability to personalize and concretize distant events is less apathetic than the ability to report them.<sup>26</sup>

The absence of structures which facilitate a greater accessibility may well be a factor of major significance in producing what are variously referred to as anomic, deviant, direct action, random, unsophisticated, or unchanneled political responses to perceived acute problems of the urban metropolis.



Any claim made here on behalf of Goodman's suggestion is strictly limited. More direct access to the urban political process should be fostered, and Goodman's suggestion is one means whereby this may be achieved. Sidney Verba has recorded that "only in situations of some stress in which a government activity is perceived to have a direct and serious impact upon the individual will a direct influence attempt be triggered off".<sup>27</sup> Urban poverty presents innumerable situations of stress, the emphasis here being on Verba's phrase "government activity is perceived to have a direct and serious impact". It is contended that measures which tend to make government more accessible and proximate (if only in a physical sense), will increase the tendencies for the urban poor to perceive direct and serious impacts of government activity.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.9 The Definition of "The Political"

Another consideration should be introduced here in order that there is full recognition of what is being suggested at this point. Sheldon Wolin has suggested that

we seem to be in an era where the individual increasingly seeks his political satisfactions outside the traditional area of politics. . . . what is significant in our time is the diffusion of the political. If this should be the case, the problem is not one of apathy, or of the decline of the political, but of the absorption of the political into non-political institutions and activities.<sup>29</sup>

This development receives similar attention in Riesman and Glazer who note that



the important things people do that have a political meaning-- party activity, voting, following the news,--seem increasingly unrelated to their experience. Other things that people do that seem more related to their experience--joining a union and getting more pay, working with a PTA group to change certain school practices, combatting race tensions in a neighbourhood-- lose or conceal their political meaning; the people who usually do these things do not think of themselves as political. To be sure, a degree of divorce between the formal-political and the informal-political has always existed. But today the attempt to bridge the gap, and to inject meaning into the more traditional and formal political arena, seems increasingly to call on apolitical motivations.<sup>30</sup> (my emphasis)

We should record at this point the research finding that formal membership in non-governmental organizations which are seen as being related to government and politics is not seen as providing effective means for the influence of governmental activity. Sidney Verba reports for example, that in the United States, where such memberships are most frequent, only 35 of a sample of 228 who reported such memberships indicate "that they would work through such an organization if they were trying to influence a local government regulation."<sup>31</sup> This finding is introduced here to indicate that for most groups, local community and private associations are not seen as politically effective, or even as political associations.<sup>32</sup> This is understandably the case, particularly where individual political influence can be more directly pursued through informal personal channels, or other political agencies. It is clear however, that such approaches are not universally available or necessary. In the case of the urban poor, indigenous associations may be easily politicized to the extent that they become untypically effective private associations pursuing group goals in the public arena.



The perception of governmental responsiveness is clearly related to the extent to which political matters are seen as assimilated by private organizations. Angus Campbell notes that "it will obviously make little difference to the public whether they vote. . . in many situations where a representative body is created to give the appearance of democratic control although the effective power is held in other hands. Once the electorate perceive that their votes have no effective consequence their interest in voting will naturally decline."<sup>33</sup> In his subsequent discussion, Wolin suggests that there exists a potential political activism which is no longer "being diverted towards the traditional forms of political life" (my emphasis).

There are two points we should note here. Firstly, Wolin has posed what is by now, the familiar problem of the definition of "the political". C. Wright Mills posed this problem in terms of public and private issues, the former a proper area for governmental involvement and the latter not.<sup>35</sup> There are clear differences between groups in terms of what financial and organizational resources they are able to mobilize for political purposes as well as the kinds of demands they make upon the political system. Definitionally, the poor have been characterized as those for whom fundamental personal demands for advancement and opportunity are presented to government, and Jacobs' characterization of the relationship as one of "dependency" is apt.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.10 The Political "Residue"

The extent to which government concerns itself with problems of poverty is, of course, a function of both political and social conceptions



of what considerations can properly be considered public. Wolin sees "the political" as the residue, after the sum of functions performed by private agencies have been subtracted from the total of "socially necessary" functions.<sup>37</sup> "In this way, the political order comes to occupy the status of a residuary legatee, shouldering those tasks which other groups are unwilling or unable to perform".<sup>38</sup> Thus a dependent group of urban poor find themselves dealing with a diverse and often un-coordinated group of private organizations as well as government. They present demands in an area where responsibilities and areas of competence are uncertain. Governments, like private agencies, play what can be described as a mediating role. The urban poor, like the Negro, "are twice removed from power: they are not influential in the civic and political circles of the city, and these circles are in turn the willing or unwilling agents of their constituents".<sup>39</sup> These factors tend to produce a sense of frustration with established channels for influencing government, and a strong measure of cynicism as to prospects for the achievement of important goals. Both of these perspectives are not easily overcome. Alternate forms of social action and political involvement may come to appear much more attractive than return to a style which reaped only disappointment. Anomic activism of many forms can then be seen as a credible, though not necessarily positive alternative to the acceptance of non-action and apathy. In Goodman's phrase, "an effective means of temporary community re-integration has been to help depressed people just to vent their spite, for spite is the vitality of the powerless".<sup>40</sup>



#### 4.11 Differential Investments in Political Process

Thus the general situation is one in which a differential is created which is related to the extent to which those who are poor are more often forced to pursue public rather than private channels for goal realization. Greater numbers among the poor have been left with no vehicle other than public action as private and personal means have proven barren so often that public spite becomes a mechanism for catharsis<sup>41</sup> and occasionally the prospect of more concrete and constructive advances. The dependent status of the urban poor is the important factor here. The assimilation of political matters by non-political institutions has different impacts on different groupings. Some are able to pursue personal goals through alternate means with considerable effectiveness; however, for those who have met with little or no success through alternate modes, public methods become much more important. Here, what is really at hand is social-structurally enforced differential investments in the political process, a particular instance of the "intensity problem" as discussed, for example, by Robert A. Dahl.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.12 A Structural Relationship

The relationship between poverty and the political, social and bureaucratic systems is a structural relationship,<sup>43</sup> reinforced by a variety of factors. When discussing the Harlem destruction of 1964, Kenneth B. Clark writes

Many of these (property) owners responded to the destruction with bewilderment and anger, for they felt that they had been serving a community which needed them. They did not realize that the



residents were not grateful for this service but bitter, as natives often feel towards the functionaries of a colonial power who, in the very act of service, keep the hated structure of oppression intact.<sup>44</sup>

Random property destruction and periodic tension release provide special opportunities to evaluate the extent of discontinuities between social and personality structures. These overt manifestations are rare however, their roots discernible only through extensive micro-political analyses.

As a side note, we should record the dysfunctionality to future generations of failures to overcome inequalities of opportunity in a present generation, a point well-argued by Melvin Tumin. Of more central concern to this discussion is Tumin's suggestion that "the unequal distribution of rewards in one generation tends to result in the unequal distribution of motivation in the succeeding generation"<sup>45</sup> (my emphasis). Not only is there an intergenerational loss of personal and political potential<sup>46</sup> as a result of intergenerational "motivation suppressions," but social and political incongruities in one generation are often dealt with by the internalization of stress by the individual and the allocation of energies to mechanisms of defense and internal adjustment, a "loss" of mental resources which might otherwise be directed towards the political system. Herbert Phillips has argued the need to recognize "the capacity of individuals in non-congruent situations to bear considerable psychological strain, and still function effectively, maintaining both their prevailing personality patterns and established social structure.

. . . Because of the human capacity to resolve psychological strain internally, by the use of well-established unconscious psychological defense mechanisms such as repression, denial, etc., much of the behavioral change



that we often expect to follow conditions of non-congruence may in fact not occur".<sup>47</sup>

This ongoing process of internalization of incongruities, suppression of aspirations, and failure to resolve perceived discrepancies between proclaimed democratic opportunities and disadvantaged personal experience is more dysfunctional to the long-range stability and health of the political process than the occasional outburst of anomic activism. Firstly, we have noted the loss of political and social potentials. Secondly, anomic manifestations of discontent provide at least some indication of demands and goals, whereas nonaction usually indicates the absence of necessary conditions for articulation (if only in voting) and thus the absence of direct indicators of what are perceived to be inadequacies.<sup>48</sup> This suggests that political decision-makers will to some extent, be unaware of the bases of potential anomic activism which may or may not be forthcoming, involving extensive destructions both social and physical.

#### 4.13 Conclusion to Chapter

The discussion of this chapter has been very straightforward. What has been presented is a group of difficulties facing the urban poor in their contacts with government and social institutions. These difficulties are persistent, immense, and understandably lead to cynicism and defeatism. That politics is resultantly seen as remote, alien, external, and pointless, seems clear. New forms of political organization and participation may well overcome many of these difficulties, although only one proposal has



been set forth in the chapter. As was suggested in Chapter I, I am not concerned to advise the poor, but rather to delineate problems which arise when we prescribe greater participation in the political process. Many of these problems are deeply rooted in the institutional practices and power relations which constitute an important part of a comprehensive description of the relationship between the urban poor and the political system. In the next chapter I will treat specific aspects pertaining to the relationship between the urban poor and bureaucracy.



## CHAPTER V

### BUREAUCRATIC FACTORS WHICH MITIGATE AGAINST PARTICIPATION

#### 5.1 General

In this chapter I will treat particular aspects of the relationship between the urban poor and government bureaucracy. The public roles of government bureaucrats account for the majority of contacts with the "political" process. That these contacts partly account for the perceptions of the political process and the utility of political involvement seems clear, but perhaps only in a general sense. This chapter will be concerned to specify major aspects of this relationship which mitigate against the participation of the urban poor. There are of course, aspects of bureaucratic behavior which encourage participation in the political process however these aspects will not receive attention here. Rather, I am concerned to specify dominant aspects of the social reality of the urban poor which make their situation a unique one; however, it is clear that groups are differentially discouraged to participate in politics by their contacts with government. Thus, it seems fair to say that the advantages of bureaucratic organizations are, as well, differentially disadvantageous for various groups and in different ways. My purpose is not to specify the advantages of bureaucratic organization, or the full range of unfortunate results. My focus is particular, and because I am concerned with factors mitigating against the participation



of the urban poor, the discussion may appear unbalanced. This is necessary because my treatment is not intended to be comprehensive.

I will argue that bureaucracy is inflexible because it operates by means of conformity to general and established rules of behavior which specify roles and mitigate against the degree of responsiveness sought by the urban poor. Bureaucracy becomes conservative and tends to satisfy interests external to urban poverty areas. Dependency and powerlessness, inequality and passivity characterize the situation of the urban poor in their interactions with government bureaucracy. The persistence of poverty and the rigidity of bureaucracy foster a low sense of personal capacity among the urban poor, and as a result, defeatist and quiescent orientations towards the political process develop and become reinforced in a defeatist circle of despondency and nonresponsiveness.

## 5.2 Displacement of Goals

Bureaucratic structures attain precision, efficiency, and reliability through the development of a set of rules considered necessary for the realization of particular goals. Attitudinal and behavioral conformity to established procedures however, also results in a measure of inflexibility. This involves a relatively higher valuation on predictability of behavior and standard role expectations.

Actions based on training and skills which have been successfully applied in the past may result in inappropriate



responses under changed conditions. An inadequate flexibility in the application of skills will, in a changing milieu, result in more-or-less serious maladjustments . . . . As a result of their day-to-day routines, people develop special preferences, antipathies, discriminations and emphases [as in] Dewey's concept of occupational psychosis [as] a pronounced character of the mind . . . this very emphasis (on patterned obligations and regulated procedures) leads to a transference of sentiments from the aims of the organization onto the particular details required by the rules. Adherence to the rules, originally conceived as a means, becomes transformed into an end-in-itself; there occurs the familiar process of displacement of goals whereby 'an instrumental value becomes a terminal value'.<sup>1</sup>

Paul Jacob's study of welfare services in Los Angeles provides an instance of this displacement of goals. He generalizes that

very few people in government have any notion of what effect their agencies are having on those unfortunate people, on whom the constellation of separate government forces bears inexorably . . . each government agency operates under its own rules, impulses, and drives, responsible not so much to the citizens' needs as to its own organizational modes.<sup>2</sup>

This displacement of goals is a significant factor in explaining the perceived lack of responsiveness of government bureaucracy. Bureaucracy operates as a system of roles which serves to implement, in particular ways, general government policies and priorities. Central to bureaucratic organization is specialization of function and division of labor. These characteristics of bureaucratic organization and representation of public policy necessitate a minimal measure of political sophistication, in order that services and information can be obtained from government. We



have noted above that government is differentially significant to the social life of various groups. As a result, an ability to deal effectively with government is of varying importance for different groups . . . That is to say, for some who have few and minor contacts with government, there is less of a need to be effective in pursuing interests vis-à-vis bureaucracy than for others who are constantly attempting to procure public resources. / this phenomenon involves two dimensions which should perhaps be distinguished: the number, or frequency of government contacts, and the individual and social consequences (actual and/or perceived) of those contacts. A poor family who are unable to obtain welfare assistance because of a rule infringement presumably are involved in bureaucratic contacts which are of considerably larger consequence than many parking ticket quarrels of more affluent individuals. This example is perhaps an oversimplified one, but it does tend to suggest that the volume and diversity of government business may often mitigate against the ability of individual and departmental agents of government to realize the measure of sensitivity to the consequences of various administrative practices which seem, on a broader view, to be required. Poor residents of central city areas very often see government as ineffectual and themselves as unable to obtain services from government, with the frequent result that what competence government does have is not employed to the full. This relates to the



circularity in democratic theory which was discussed in the first chapter.

That is to say, in instances where the individual has been unsuccessful in attempting to obtain services from government personnel, he may abandon any hope of doing so in the future. As a result of initial failures then, he ceases to pursue what channels are available. These are cases of noninvolvement following nonresponsiveness. The bureaucratic agency with which he was dealing may become much more flexible and accessable, but the discouraged will only be able to take advantage of the improvement subsequent to a change in perspective. Thus we are here dealing with an inaccurate perception of a changed reality, a kind of impasse which seemingly will only be overcome by a bureaucratic sensitivity and aggressiveness which it may well be unreasonable to expect. What does seem fairly clear however, is the need to discuss both responsiveness, and perceived responsiveness.

Administrative decentralization has been discussed as a measure to facilitate bureaucratic responsiveness. On the other hand, we should concern ourselves with the competence of citizens to approach the political process in ways which have reasonable prospects of satisfying interests.



### 5.3 "Self Education"

As a mechanism which will facilitate the development of an alternative relationship between local citizens and governmental bureaucracy, we should consider the tenability of, in Herbert Krosney's phrase, "social programs that involve the community in self-education",<sup>3</sup> which recognize that privacy and publicity, the conception of possible approaches to change and the presentation of alternatives are important instruments of power.<sup>4</sup>

If we grant Angus Campbell's assumption that "people begin at an early age to develop a sense of their own capacity to manage the world around them"<sup>5</sup>, we must recognize that the urban poor are a grouping whose sense of capacity in this regard is particularly weak.<sup>6</sup> Thus processes of self-education should be intended to fill gaps in the political experience and personal development of the urban poor. Means for the effecting of these goals will be various, among the most important being the provision of channels through which the urban poor as a general group, and particularly those emerging from their numbers in leadership capacities, will be able to participate in the conception of alternative goals and means for their realization. Possibilities for "self-education" are to a considerable degree, contingent on



the role played by democratic leadership. In an article entitled "Democratic Leadership and Mass Manipulation", T.W. Adorno argued that

Today, perhaps more than ever, it is the function of democratic leadership to make the subjects of democracy, the people, conscious of their own wants and needs, as against the ideologies which are hammered into their heads by the innumerable communications of vested interests. They must come to understand those tenets of democracy which, if violated, logically impede the exercise of their own rights and reduce them from self-determining subjects to objects of opaque political maneuvers.<sup>7</sup>

#### 5.4 Dependency

Let me add to Adorno's point by arguing that the situation of the urban poor is characterized by patterns of dependency. Adorno's argument can, of course, be taken in its general terms as urging that citizens be both competent and involved in matters which directly (or indirectly) influence their position and parameters of action. Warren C. Haggstrom makes one of my points when he argues that

the poor by virtue of their situation, tend to be more dependent than members of other groups on a larger number of powerful persons and organizations which are often very unclear about the bases for their actions and unpredictable in their decisions, and which further render the poor helpless by condescending or hostile attitudes, explicit verbal communications which state or imply the inferiority of the poor and callousness or actual harassment.<sup>8</sup>

In a word, these relationships are primarily relationships of condesc-



gension on the one hand, and dependency on the other." They are initiated and supported from outside the neighbourhoods of poverty and imposed on the poor, and . . . they fail to make any lasting impact on neighbourhoods of poverty."<sup>9</sup> The persistence of poverty despite allocations of resources to poverty areas understandably resulted in discussions of the effectiveness of traditional structures and modes of approaching these problems. Central to traditional methods has been bureaucratic organization. Bureaucratic organization has been characterized as rule-based and external with the frequent result that "people tend to retreat from or to attack controlling forces external to their lives" (my emphasis).<sup>10</sup>

We have noted above that the poor often perceive bureaucratic contacts as representative of both the larger political system and social valuations and priorities. There is a sense in which bureaucratic behaviors and policies represent political policy which represents the outcome of bargaining, indeed political power. There would appear to be substantial grounds for expecting that political authority represents higher, rather the lower class interests. Adorno in fact, speaks explicitly in terms of "vested interests". Among those with "vested interests" to whom he refers we would want to see included both the suburban "opponents" of poverty programs of whom Richard A. Cloward speaks,<sup>11</sup> and those in positions of civic and anti-poverty leadership who may, for



a variety of possible reasons, perceive their own advantage in the perpetuation of the inequalities which constitute the bases of urban poverty.

The preceding paragraph contains three phrases, the use of which should be clarified. In order that my usage here is made explicit and unwanted connotations are properly excluded, stipulative meanings will be set forth. As well as clarifying my meaning in the use of these phrases, what follows is intended to reiterate major social components of the situation of the urban poor which have an important bearing on their relationship to governmental bureaucracy. The three phrases: "vested interests", "suburban 'opponents' of poverty programs", and "inequalities which constitute the bases of urban poverty".

### 5.5 "Vested Interests"

Firstly, "vested interests" are in no sense the embodiment of "evil" or "unnatural" tendencies. Rather, when we spoke of "system" as tendencies towards the maintenance of a particular pattern of interaction, the suggestion was that a system can be characterized by a certain measure of inertia, a proclivity towards the perpetuation of an established matrix of statuses, social goals, and roles, and a resistance to substantial changes in ongoing patterns of



interaction. To the extent that a system -- as a pattern of interactions -- is valued by the social components of which it is constituted, all individuals and groups have a "vested" interest in its perpetuation. The absence of favorable valuation of the system by individuals and groups constitutes a potentially favorable valuation towards alternate patterns of interaction. We should be clear, however, that the absence of a favorable valuation towards an established system does not necessarily imply revolt, innovation, or alternate modes of non-support. Thus we can speak only of potential favorable valuation of alternate patterns of interaction. The determinants of favorable valuations of innovative patterns of interaction are many and receive only indirect mention here. What is essential to our purposes, is to recognize that the absence of favorable valuations towards the established system takes many different forms which can perhaps be seen as stretching along a continuum from acquiescence to agitation for major revolutionary changes.

Although the relationship between social position and support for system maintenance has not been made explicitly clear in any precisely quantifiable manner, we have noted the direct relationship between higher social position and increasing involvement in political life. Thus when we speak of "vested interest" in the sense employed by Adorno, rather than my more general meaning, we are speaking of



those who occupy higher positions in social structure, who are more often politically involved, and whose position in social structure suggests that they are more resistant to changes in patterns of interaction and resource allocation than those occupying lower position in social structure and who are less frequently involved in political life. It is in this context that governmental bureaucracy, as a network of rules and procedures intended to provide stability, regularity, and predictability of behavior, plays an important general role, tending to preserve ongoing relationships, behaviors and statuses. As a mechanism intended to implement the social valuation of particular means through which political input processes occur, bureaucracy performs a limiting function, encouraging the use of particular methods of attempting to influence governmental policy and, at least, not readily accomodating others. As a result, for example, interest groups are presumably more effective in pursuing incremental gains than are rioters. Dissatisfaction, to the extent that it is directed into political channels, aspires to modify to a greater or lesser extent, the priorities and regulations which provide direction and scope to the activities of governmental bureaucracy. The impact of bureaucracy upon the political perceptions of the dissatisfied (as others) acts as a major formative variable in terms of the extent to which government is seen to be amenable to change in marginal as in major ways. As a rule, political demands



are not articulated and as a result cannot be publicly "resolved" when interests are not openly pursued because of a perceived futility of such efforts, a pattern which, as suggested above, is related to the extent to which instrumental values become terminal values in the context of bureaucratic behaviours. Affinities develop for established and reliable role expectations, providing security and stability for the occupants of bureaucratic positions. We are now able to distinguish a second particular form of "vested" interest, a tendency for those performing bureaucratic functions to favor the perpetuation of an established routine with as little modification as possible.<sup>13</sup> The extent of this tendency is an empirical matter of course; however, for our purposes a meaning has been affixed to the phrase "vested interests" which is in some measure precise, and in the present context at least, substantively devoid of emotive content.

#### 5.6 Suburban "Opponents"

The meaning of the second phrase "suburban 'opponents' of poverty programs" can be clarified quite easily. This was indeed suggested by the use of quotation marks around the word "opponents". In general terms, we conceive of the allocation of urban resources on a microscopic level as a zero-sum game, characterized by an



annually modified but fixed and determinate amount of administrative resources. Thus funds allocated to central city poverty programs cannot also be expended on suburban parks programs. In this quite limited sense, two groups are competing for a share of limited urban resources, and in this sense residents of suburbs are "opponents" of (that is, competitors of) poverty programs. It is certainly possible that increased political knowledge and awareness will result in the perception by organized groups of the urban poor of external (and economically more advantaged) groups as opponents in a general sense. Perhaps more frequently, the urban poor see government bureaucrats as their opponents or enemies because they fail to provide the assistance considered necessary. This is certainly understandable, as is the excuse offered by the bureaucrat who says he must follow the rules without exception because government resources are limited. The resources of government become limited in a sense, because the poor have failed to impress decision-makers with the extent of their need, with the result that poverty programs, whether this means welfare payments, employment programs, or city services, are clearly inadequate to deal comprehensively with the persistent problems encountered by the urban poor. In such instances, it is understandable that the poor see suburban parks expenditures and subsidies to industrial development as unnecessary and/or superfluous expenditures of government resources which might otherwise be devoted to poverty programs.



### 5.7 Persistent "Inequalities"

"Inequality" is a concept with a complex tradition of attempts to give it meaning which can be applied to diverse and particular situations. An overly rigorous usage is not necessary in the context of this discussion, however we should attempt to indicate some particular sense in which the word appears here. Ralf Dahrendorf, in an important book, argues that inequalities in social structure and social position inevitably accompany social organization.<sup>14</sup>

His thesis is based on an analysis of processes of institutionalization of social position and social role, a pattern which has received some attention here. Processes of individual learning and social development commence only metaphorically with a tabula raza, a point argued for example, by Morris R. Cohen.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, individuals commence life projects from positions in social structure which are in an important sense determinate, and (in principle) determinable. This need not imply a tight predestination of prospects or a set of universally applicable limitations accompanying occupancy of various social positions: however, correlations between initial social position and subsequent social achievement suggest relationships which may, upon investigation, be representable in something of a general causal form such as: "In conditions X, if A then B". That is to say, the determination of factors necessary to the achievement of a particular social position,



income, prestige, life style, or perspective will most certainly include considerations of the "starting point", or initial position in social structure occupied by the particular individual(s) in question. As we generally assume that events come about in a manner which can in principle be determined, we expect to be able to attribute the achievement of a particular position to a variety of factors which would most certainly include early social position and learning experience. Thus if we loosely equate "unequal" with "different", we should be quite willing to grant that individuals and prospects for their material advancement are indeed unequal in a not insignificant sense.<sup>16</sup> So when we speak of inequalities constituting the bases of urban poverty, we are arguing only that those whom we are calling poor occupy positions which are considered to be in an important way different from those we call middle class, or upper class. An elaborate account of criteria employed to distinguish the poor from the middle class and efforts to set boundaries between one group and the other will not be undertaken as the argument set forth here has only been a general one to which such stipulations are not considered necessary. It is contended however, that there are important differences between those whom we are calling poor and others, which enable a discussion of unique relationships between the urban poor and the political system.



## 5.8 Conclusion

It has been argued that bureaucracy is a central factor in this unique situation. To summarize, the main attributes of the relationship between the urban poor and the political system as represented through bureaucratic structures are as follows. (1) A lack of bureaucratic responsiveness is often attributable to a displacement of goals such that means (ie. rules of bureaucratic behavior) become ends. (2) As the poor have a weaker sense of capacity to control the social world around them, the inflexibility of an externally controlled bureaucracy tends to re-inforce such orientations in those instances where clients of bureaucracy attempt to innovate or procure special assistance. (3) Bureaucratic treatment of poverty clients tends to be condescending and fosters feelings of helplessness and dependency. (4) Bureaucracy seems persistently ineffective in facilitating the abolition of urban poverty with the frequent result that pessimism, defeatism and the perceived irrelevancy of bureaucratic and government agencies are fostered. (5) Bureaucracy is seen as unamenable to change because it is seen as primarily answerable to external and more affluent groups. (6) Social structures develop "inertias", and more or less rigid patterns of behavior, and as those who occupy more fortunate positions are more frequently involved with political life, it would seem to follow that this pattern would tend to facilitate a conservative rather than a reform orientation among political leadership and bureaucratic



personnel. (7) Bureaucracy as rigid, rule-based and ordered from "above" and "outside", acts as an important element in bringing about defeatist perceptions as to prospects for social change, and personal and group mobilities by means of public political processes.

In more general terms, this chapter has treated important attributes of the relationship between the urban poor and government bureaucracy which mitigate against the active involvement of the urban poor in the political process. The perceived utility of involvement in politics is related to rudimentary perceptions of the amenability of government to change, and it is here that the ways in which bureaucracy operates on a day-to-day basis has an important formative influence. For the urban poor government bureaucracy is often seen as hostile and external. As a result, participation in the political process is seen as an ineffective method of attempting to influence the cumbersome and alien machinery of government as represented by defined bureaucratic roles.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 General

This concluding chapter will serve to reiterate the major points of my argument and clarify the ways in which these points are related. Each chapter has been intended to argue one major point. I have been concerned with the place of government responsiveness in Chapter II. In Chapter III I argued that we should employ a broader notion of political participation than we often do, one which encompasses the various meanings of political action for different individuals and groups. In Chapters IV and V, my focus was substantially empirical as I attempted to discuss major impediments to the involvement of the urban poor in political life. Such empirical study can usefully be undertaken for many different groups; however, the urban poor have been treated here because their situation typifies many of the problems which are encountered when too superficial an approach is taken, and greater political participation is urged without regard for the social and



experiential context in which such involvement is presumably rooted. Thus it can be said that the empirical concerns of chapters IV and V provide support or documentation intended to buttress the more general arguments of chapters II and III.

## 6.2 Responsiveness and Stability

That we should foster responsiveness of government seems obvious. The value we place on responsiveness when compared with other systemic and democratic considerations is far less established as the current "democratization" debate would suggest. I argue for an emphasis on responsiveness above stability, although these are not always clearly and consistently competing values. This argument is undertaken with a view to the situation of nonparticipant, disadvantaged groups such as the urban poor. In particular, I argue that we should be clear about the linkage between the satisfaction of interests and effective democracy. Such a linkage is fostered by an emphasis on governmental responsiveness to be engendered by high levels of involvement in the political process. I have not been specific about the forms such involvement of the urban poor will, or should take, and this has been intentional. Reference has been made to self-interested activism; however, beyond this it is felt that recommendations suffer because theoretical generality often replaces understanding of the perceptions and experiences



of the urban poor. The satisfaction of interests will also be fostered if government is perceived as responsive, a suggestion which underlies much of the discussion. I have proposed the decentralization of government administration as an approach which speaks specifically to this point. It seems clear that we should concern ourselves with two often separate aspects of any argument in favor of the greater responsiveness of government to the interests of the urban poor. On the one hand, the effectiveness of government and political parties in meeting the challenges and demands presented by the urban poor should become greater as a result of such measures as decentralization of administration and the allocation of social resources to poverty areas to be disposed of by the urban poor themselves. These measures should objectively operate in ways which encourage the urban poor to participate to a greater extent because rewards are more proximate and attractive. The second aspect of this question follows the first. When the urban poor are able to dispose of government and private resources which are much greater than in the past, they come to look upon the orthodox institutions which make these resources available more favorably, and their estimations of the political process are higher because the new political realities are seen as more relevant and influential. That is to say, the political process must both be more relevant, and be seen as such. Both the nonparticipation and the disadvantagement



of the urban poor can be treated when we concern ourselves with responsiveness. The particular argument in favor of an emphasis on responsiveness which has been set forth here, stems primarily from a concern with the disadvantaged status of the urban poor as both nonparticipant, and unsuccessful in the private pursuit of personal interests.

### 6.3 A Broader Concept of Participation

In chapter III, I argued that we should be aware of variance in the meaning of political actions for various actors. Only subsequent to such an awareness can we responsibly expect that prescriptions intending to increase participation will be effective. This requires that we comprehend the perceptions of the political process and political institutions by the constituency with which we are concerned. Bearing such perceptions in mind, we should be in a position to offer proposals which deal with the roots rather than the manifestations of noninvolvement. We should consider the possibility of a political process which is seen as more relevant and useful, and results in an ongoing social activism. If such activism develops, the vote may well become a relatively minor and formal expression of more elaborate day-to-day involvements in the political process. These possibil-



may well be requirements if persistent urban poverty is to be overcome. It is in this context that I have argued that we must deal with the powerlessness of the poor as well as their lack of material well being.

#### 6.4 Social and Bureaucratic Factors

Chapters IV and V were primarily empirical in focus. These chapters were intended to document the ways in which the political process comes to be seen as nonresponsive and external by the urban poor. This task requires discussion of the objective situation of the urban poor and their perceptions of the political process and government institutions. Of particular importance is the absence of resourceful political leadership among the urban poor, and the existence of ethnic and status conflicts which impede the ability of the urban poor to perceive and pursue common (poverty) interests in an effective and organized way. The inflexibility of bureaucratic procedures and the dependency of the urban poor on unco-ordinated public and private agencies have been singled out as factors which tend to bring about passivity and frustration. These two chapters were not intended to comprehensively survey the situation of the urban poor, but rather to specify particular dominant aspects of their situation which account for the nonparticipation of this group and must be considered if



effective prescriptions are to be set forth. In the earlier chapters I attempted to present the evaluative and conceptual premises which should provide direction to these prescriptions.

### 6.5 General Conclusions

In general then, the argument of this thesis can be summarized by the following propositions. (1) In order to competently pursue the greater and more effective participation of the poor in political life, we should emphasize the responsiveness of government above considerations of stability. (2) As well, we require a broader concept of participation, one which is able to encompass the variable significance of political action which results from different political perceptions and experiences. (3) Recommendations intended to encourage participation of the poor must be based on a comprehension of dominant aspects of the social situation and perceptions of this group. Thus recommendations should deal with the roots of poverty and nonparticipation, rather than with subsequent manifestations of the frustrated and powerless situation of the urban poor.

Participation in the political process is clearly an important mechanism which will facilitate the advancement of



the urban poor individually, and as a group. The effective utilization of this mechanism will only occur however, subsequent to an understanding of the relationship between the political system and poverty. Such an understanding requires that we consider the dominant and systemic aspects of the social world of the urban poor in order that subsequent recommendations deal directly with political aspects of persistent poverty in urban areas.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>C.F. Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), p. 116-7.

<sup>2</sup>C.F. Angus Campbell, P.E. Converse, W.E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 58-9.

<sup>3</sup>For such a view see for example, David Easton, The Political System (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953).

<sup>4</sup>There are other measures of legitimacy that could be used such as votes for a governing political party.

<sup>5</sup>Brian Barry, Political Argument (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup>In 1965 for example 6% of the U.A. poor households were farm and 12.5 million of 32.5 million poor persons were outside the 227 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (38.4%). D.P. Moynihan, "Poverty in Cities," The Metropolitan Enigma: Inquiries into the Nature and Dimensions of America's "Urban Crisis", ed. by James Q. Wilson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 301.

<sup>7</sup>James Q. Wilson, "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B.C. Spiegel, Vol. I (Washington: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), p. 53ff.

<sup>8</sup>Charles E. Silberman, "The City and the Negro," Fortune, Vol. LXV (March, 1962), p. 88-91, quoted in James Q. Wilson, "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," p. 53.

<sup>9</sup>"On Theories of Urban Violence," Urban Affairs, Vol. II, No. 2 (March, 1969), p. 293.

<sup>10</sup>James Heilbrun, "How Much Neighbourhood Control?" Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B.C. Spiegel, Vol. 2, p. 277.



<sup>11</sup> Although the perspective which I attribute to Milbrath is not argued explicitly in the terms in which it is characterized here, it is to be found for example in: Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 312ff; G. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), Ch. XIII; John Plamenatz, "Electoral Studies and Democratic Theory," Political Studies, No. 6, 1958, pp. 1-9; Bertrand de Jouvenal, Sovereignty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (Glenco: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 29-35.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>This is what Peter Bachrach refers to as the "Self Developmental Approach to Democracy". See The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., p. 153-4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 53-4, 116-7.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.

<sup>6</sup>T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 126.

<sup>7</sup>Op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>8</sup>The kibbutz forms of political organization provides some indication of the extent to which the size of the community unity is an important determinant of possible levels, and types of involvement in political life. Here, see for example, Lewis S. Feuer, "Leadership and Democracy in the Collective Settlements of Israel," Studies in Leadership, ed. by A.W. Gouldner (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1965), p. 377ff. "The Hashomer Hatzair settlements maintain that limitations of members is essential to maintain the "organic character" of the kibbutz. This, they define as "striving for the utmost democratization, the fullest possible participation of the members in the social and economic life of the kibbutz, the possibility for the individual to embrace every phase of the settlement in order to enable him to be responsible for the kibbutz as a whole." The numerical growth of a settlement, says the Hashomer Hatzair, should not be allowed to exceed its social absorptive capacity, i.e., its capacity to allow new members to become active in its operation, . . . See also Angus Campbell, "The Passive Citizen," Political Opinion and Electoral Behavior: Essays and Studies, ed. by Edward C. Dreyer and Walter A. Rosenbaum (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1967), p. 185.

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., p. 121.



<sup>10</sup>"The Logic of Functional Analysis," Symposium on Sociological Theory, ed. by L. Gross (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), p. 294.

<sup>11</sup>Revolutionary Change (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 60.



### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>This bears resemblances to Almond and Powell's concept of a "subject-participant orientation", applicable in situations where substructure autonomy [and/or effectiveness] is undermined to the extent that substructures perform input functions only in "certain quite carefully specified conditions", Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>"Criteria for Political Apathy," Studies in Leadership, ed. by A.W. Gouldner (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1965), p. 546-547. The adaptability of the political system as to means whereby diverse groups are able to identify with political leaders and decisions is an important part of Harold Lasswell's more general notion of "cultural survival". See Politics: Who Gets What, When, How (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1958), p. 156ff.

<sup>3</sup>C.F. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), passim.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), p. 236.

<sup>5</sup>"Mass Suffrage, Secret Voting and Political Participation," Political Sociology, ed. by L.A. Coser (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 117.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>7</sup>This conception involves a more elaborate and demanding participation by the "rank and file" in the ongoing political process, certainly more demanding than the "holding company" notion of democratic leadership which tends to see political leadership assuming most, if not all responsibility for the day-to-day operations, and membership [or non-leadership citizens] exercising occasional prerogatives as to the return or rejection of leadership and the periodic exercise of plebiscitary direct decision-making powers of veto. Here, see for example, Scott Greer, "Individual participation in Mass Society," Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. by R. Young (Eronston: Northwestern University Press, 1958), p. 341ff. for the form this "holding company" conceptualization takes in trade unions. See also William A Gamson, Power and Discontent (Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1968), p. 98-9.



<sup>8</sup> The Semi-Sovereign People (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> See R.E. Lane, Political Life: Why and How People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1959), Ch. 16, p. 334.

<sup>10</sup> Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. xiv.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Cloward, "Illegitimate Means, Anomie, and Deviant Behavior," American Sociological Review, Vol. 24, No. 2 (April, 1959), p. 168, passim. Also see Shin'ya Ono, "The Limits of Bourgeois Pluralism," Apolitical Politics, ed. by Charles A. McCoy and John Playford (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967), p. 108-9, and Morton Baratz and Peter Bachrach, "Two Faces of Power," American Political Science Review, Vol. 56 (December, 1962).

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit., p. 334.

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit., p. 103, 105. See also James Q. Wilson, Negro Politics: The Search for Leadership (New York: The Free Press, 1960), p. 54. See also C.W. Mills, The Sociological Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 174; Henry B. Mayo, An Introduction to Democratic Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 59; S. Rokkan, "Mass Suffrage," p. 131; A. Campbell, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> C.F.H. Lasswell, A. Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> "Social Structure and Anomie," American Sociological Review, Vol. III, No. 5 (October, 1938), p. 672-82.

<sup>18</sup> Such an approach is urged by Milbrath, op. cit., p. 141.



#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>C.F. Angus Campbell, op. cit., p. 183, "We may assume that the expected differential [which the electorate thinks likely to result from the choice of one or the other alternatives available to it] will be small [and political passivity consequently high] if the political institutions are not seen as responsive to public influence." Thus it becomes tempting to operate on the assumption that the "problem" of participation is not one of responsiveness with or without high levels of participation from all conceivable groupings, but rather one of the perception of responsiveness by large numbers from all conceivable groupings.

<sup>2</sup>See Lasswell and Kaplan, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>As Robert Lane notes, "gain from governmental policy for low income groups must be collective gains, gains granted to classes or groups of people, which may or may not accrue to any one individual." op. cit., p. 221. We have been taking this general pattern as the basis for this discussion and the probable direction of advancements achieved by the urban poor.

<sup>4</sup>See Peter Worsley, "Bureaucracy and Decolonization: Democracy From the Top," The New Sociology: Essays in Social Science and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills, ed. by Irving L. Horowitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 386-7.

<sup>5</sup>Here see Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," Political Opinion and Electoral Behavior: Essays and Studies, ed. by Edward C. Dreyer and Walter A. Rosenbaum (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1967), p. 256, "The principles which govern the political process seem vague, recondite, and impossible to relate to actual events." As well, we should note dangers cited by Riesman and Glazer when opinion is divorced from influence. "They point to the unrealistic nature of opinion lodged in the minds of those who have no experience in the relevant situations and have no reason to expect that their views will ever be tested. These are, by and large, low status persons, and the discrepancy helps to explain qualitative differences in participation--the marginal character of the views expressed, the ineffective measures employed, and the fringe movements which draw their clientele from the lower socio-economic classes." Robert Lane, op. cit., p. 226, Riesman and Glazer's discussion is set forth in "The Meaning of Opinion," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. XII, (1948), pp. 631-648.



<sup>6</sup>This is not inconsistent with W.G. Runciman's meaning of decentralization of elites,--both accessible to, and [in some manner] recallable by the particular interests over which some measure of power is exercised--"at as many points as is administratively workable". See Social Science and Political Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 78ff.

<sup>7</sup>A. Campbell, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>8</sup>Op. cit., p. 104-5. See also Hans B.C. Spiegel and Stephen D. Mittenthal, "The Many Faces of Citizen Participation: A Bibliographic Overview," Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B.C. Spiegel, Vol. I (Washington: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>"Captives, Consensus and Conflict: Implications for New Roles in Social Change," Social Theory and Social Invention, ed. by H.D. Stein (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve, U., 1968), p. 111.

<sup>10</sup>"The Social Dynamics of the Ghetto," Aspects of Poverty, ed. by B. Seligman (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1966), p. 77.

<sup>11</sup>Stephan Thermstrom, "Black Power," Partisan Review 2 (Spring, 1968), p. 227. See also R.E. Lane, op. cit., Ch. XVII, p. 230, and Harold Lasswell, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>12</sup>See for example Andre Phillip, "Socialism and the Social Classes," The Political Imagination, ed. by Edgar Litt (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1966), p. 97-8.

<sup>13</sup>Here see Maurice Stein, The Eclipse of Community (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960), p. 64, also Riesman and Glazer, "Criterion," p. 513. "Studies of participation and non-participation in voluntary associations provide evidence that lower class groups are, in general more 'privatised' than upper class groups, no matter what form of interest participation are included in measuring of lower-class participation. . . . Low income people have very low participation in non-political groups of any formal sort, and frequently have very little interest in matters that affect them directly." Also see J.Q. Wilson, "Citizen Participation," p. 50. This tendency towards privatism and the narrowing and limiting of horizons is not a response unique to the poor. See Ely Chinoy, Automobile Workers and the American Dream (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 453.



<sup>14</sup> C.F.C. Wright Mills, "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIX (September, 1942), p. 171, "Instead of problems of class structure involving immigration, the tendency has been to institute problems in terms of immigration involving the nationalist assimilation of individuals. The fact that some individuals have had opportunities to rise in the American hierarchy decreases the chance fully to see the ceilings of class. Under these conditions such structures are seen as fluctuating and unsubstantial and are likely to be explained not in terms of class position but in terms of status attitudes." Also, Robert Presthus in his discussion of shortcomings of pluralist theory notes that "Real competition on any specific issue is limited to relatively few powerful groups. The weakness of the consumer interest is one glaring example of existing inequities in bargaining power. The organizations that have most influence vis-a-vis government are producer groups, galvanized into action by a focused and compelling economic interest" (my emphasis here), Men at the Top (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 31. As Lane has pointed out, "Since middle-class and upper-class people tend to belong to more groups than working-class people, greater mutual contact makes for greater awareness of political problems, and greater reinforcement of class values and partisanship among upper-strata groups than lower-strata groups. . . ." (my emphasis). Op cit., p. 231.

<sup>15</sup> Individual Participation. . ." p. 335.

<sup>16</sup> "Citizen Participation in Political Life: Norway and the United States of America," Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior: Essays and Studies, ed. by E. Dreyer and W. Rosenbaum, p. 457.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Gans, The Urban Villager (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. 294-6.

<sup>18</sup> L.W. Milbrath, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>19</sup> Resolving Social Conflicts (New York: Harper and Row, 1948), p. 177, cited in F. Elkin, The Child and Society (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 93. See also E. Franklin Frasier, Black Bourgeoisie (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 160.

<sup>20</sup> "Power and Status" Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings, ed. by Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1957), p. 137.

<sup>21</sup> People or Personnel: Decentralizing and the Mixed System (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Prelude to Riot: A View of Urban America from the Bottom (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 8.



<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Op. cit., p. 251.

<sup>25</sup> Op. cit., p. 15, also P. Worsley, op. cit., p. 384.

<sup>26</sup> "Criteria for Apathy," p. 548.

<sup>27</sup> "Political Participation and Strategies of Influence: A Comparative Study," Political Opinion and Electoral Behavior, ed. by E. Dreyer and W. Rosenbaum, p. 481.

<sup>28</sup> C.F. Charles V. Hamilton, "Black Power," Partisan Review 2 (Spring, 1968), p. 206.

<sup>29</sup> Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1960), p. 353.

<sup>30</sup> "Criteria for Political Apathy," p. 521.

<sup>31</sup> "Political Participation," p. 485.

<sup>32</sup> See also Shin'ya Ono, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit., p. 183-4.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>35</sup> See also Roy E. Jones, The Functional Analysis of Political Action: An Introductory Discussion (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 32, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Here see also Ben Seligman, Permanent Poverty: An American Syndrome (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1968), p. 144ff, who characterizes the status of the urban poor as powerless, receptive and anonymous.

<sup>37</sup> This of course assumes both a known, and an agreed upon number of socially necessary functions. It would seem that Wolin's usage is a general one, not intended in a particularly rigorous or quantifiable manner.

<sup>38</sup> Op. cit., p. 431.



<sup>39</sup> James Q. Wilson, Negro Politics, p. 287, see also E. Franklin Frazier, op. cit., p. 86, 95ff, this "two-step" character of political influence also results in the perception of "Washington" as more likely to deal with the needs of the urban poor, than local city hall. . . . "It was, for example, at the hallowed grass-roots level that urban renewal was made no more than an instrumentality of real estate profit." Michael Harrington, "A Subversive Version of the Great Society," Social Theory and Social Invention, ed. by Herman D. Stein, p. 58, also see Milbrath, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>40</sup> Op. cit., p. 156, see also H. Gans, "The Ghetto Rebellions and Urban Class Conflict," Urban Riots: Violence and Social Change, ed. by R.H. Connery (New York: The Academy of Political Science, Columbia University, 1968), p. 43, "the specialized structures. . . exists in relation to persisting non-specialized structures which are certainly modified by the existence of the specialized ones, but are by no means assimilated to them. In other words the modern, mass, bureaucratically organized party has not supplanted the informal coteries of notables which preceded it, but combines with this 'more primitive' type of structure in what amounts to a mixed system." See also p. 105 in The Civic Culture, and Lasswell and Kaplan, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> See Lasswell and Kaplan, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 99ff.

<sup>43</sup> Here we employ "structure" as defined by Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., in Comparative Politics, p. 21, "By 'structure' we mean the observable activities which make up the political system. To refer to these activities as having a structure simply implies that there is a certain regularity to them." (my emphasis).

<sup>44</sup> Op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> "Some Principles of Stratification," p. 423.

<sup>46</sup> See L. Milbrath, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>47</sup> "Personality and Social Structure in a Siamese Community," Human Organization, Vol. XXII, No. 2 (1963), p. 105.

<sup>48</sup> In functionalist terminology, this is known as "interest latency," see Roy E. Jones, op. cit., p. 77ff. Jones subsequently records that "It is dysfunctional inputs which drive the system from level to level," from which we might appropriately conclude that latent dysfunctional inputs represent "lost," or "non-activated" potentials for systemic modifications and systemic responsiveness. See p. 85ff.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup> Robert Merton, "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality," Reader in Bureaucracy, ed. by Robert Merton, et al. (New York: The Free Press, 1952), p. 364-5. See also Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul, Dover Books (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), p. 373, Peter Blau, op. cit., p. 91, and Peter Worsley, op. cit., p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> See E.E. Schattschneider, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Lane's statement in this regard is indicative: "Lower status persons have less economic security, and partly, for that reason, feel less sense of control over their (political) environment." Op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>7</sup> Studies in Leadership, p. 420.

<sup>8</sup> "The Power of the Poor," Poverty and Social Policy in Canada, ed. by W.E. Mann (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), p. 391.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 391.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>11</sup> "Commentary," Social Theory and Social Invention, ed. by H.D. Stein, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example Herbert Krosney, op. cit., p. 22, "Mobilization for Youth, Threatened established community patterns on The Lower East Side [of New York] with public money that often represents the institutions it proposed to upset and [as a result] found itself politically isolated." For a more general statement see Saul D. Alinsky, "The War on Poverty--Political Pornography," Children and Poverty, ed. by



N.Y. Glazer and Carol Creedon, p. 315. See also Chalmers Johnson, op. cit., p. 77, and Harold Lasswell, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>13</sup> C.F. Peter Blau, Bureaucracy in Modern Society (New York: Random House, Inc., 1956), p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> A Preface to Logic, Meridian Books (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1956), p. 99ff.

<sup>16</sup> In Jean-Paul Sartre's idiom, this perspective is set forth as follows: "Every man is defined negatively by the sum of total possibles which are impossible for him; that is, by a future more or less blocked off. For the under-privileged classes, each cultural, technical, or material enrichment of society represents a diminution, an impoverishment; the future is almost entirely barred. Thus, both positively and negatively, the social possibles are lived as schematic determinations of the individual future. And the more individual possible is only the internalization and enrichment of a social possible." Search for a Method, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes, Vintage Books (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto, 1963), p. 95.



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